THE PARIS REVIEW

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The Paris Review is published by The Paris Review, S.A.R.L. au capital de 5000 fr. Vol 9, N° 34. Numéro de presse 26.295. Spring-Summer 1965. European editorial & publication office at 17, rue de Tournon, Paris 6e. USA editorial & distribution office at 45-39 171 Place, Flushing 58, NY. Representative in all countries except France & USA: Jonathan Cape Limited, Thirty Bedford Square, London, W.C.1. Distributed in the USA by Eastern News Company & Doubleday & Co. Official representation of The Paris Review Inc. of New York in France, Société Tourvoy, 17, rue de Tournon, Paris 6e. La gerante: Mme Colette Duhamel. Printed in the Netherlands by Koninklijke Drukkerij G. J. Thieme, N.V. Nijmegen.

Price per single copy in France: 5.00 fr. In the USA: $ 1.25. In the UK: 6/–. Postpaid subscription for four copies in France: 21 fr. In francs outside France: 22 fr. In the USA: $ 4.00. In the UK & sterling area: £ 1.7.4.

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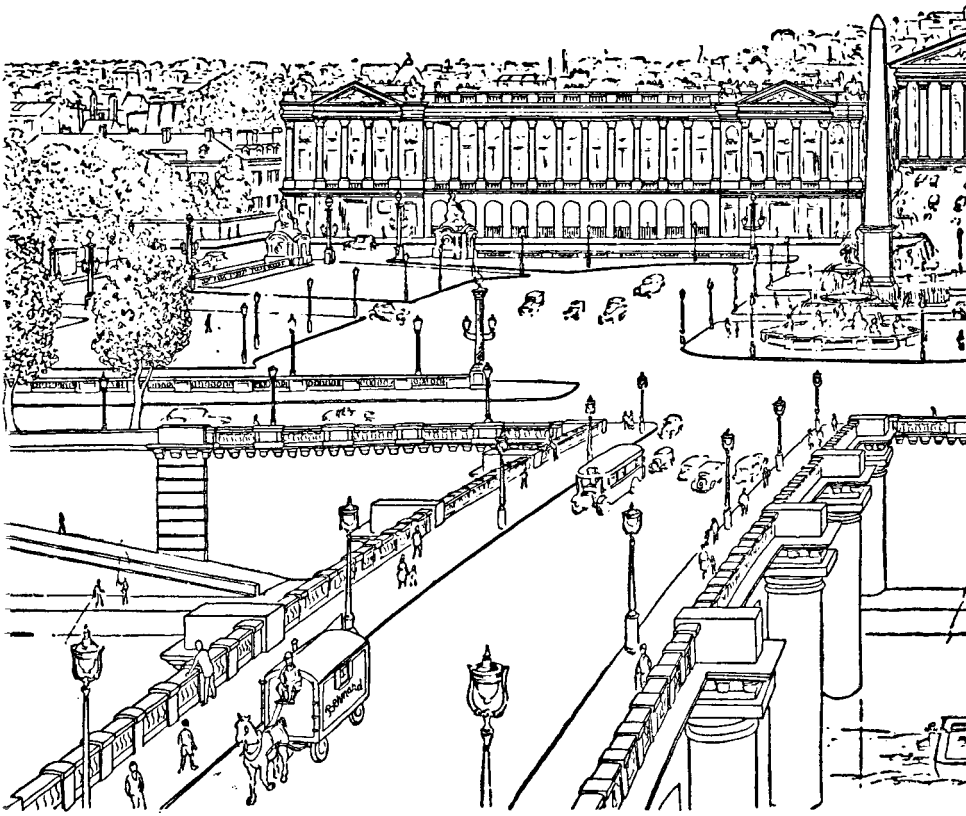

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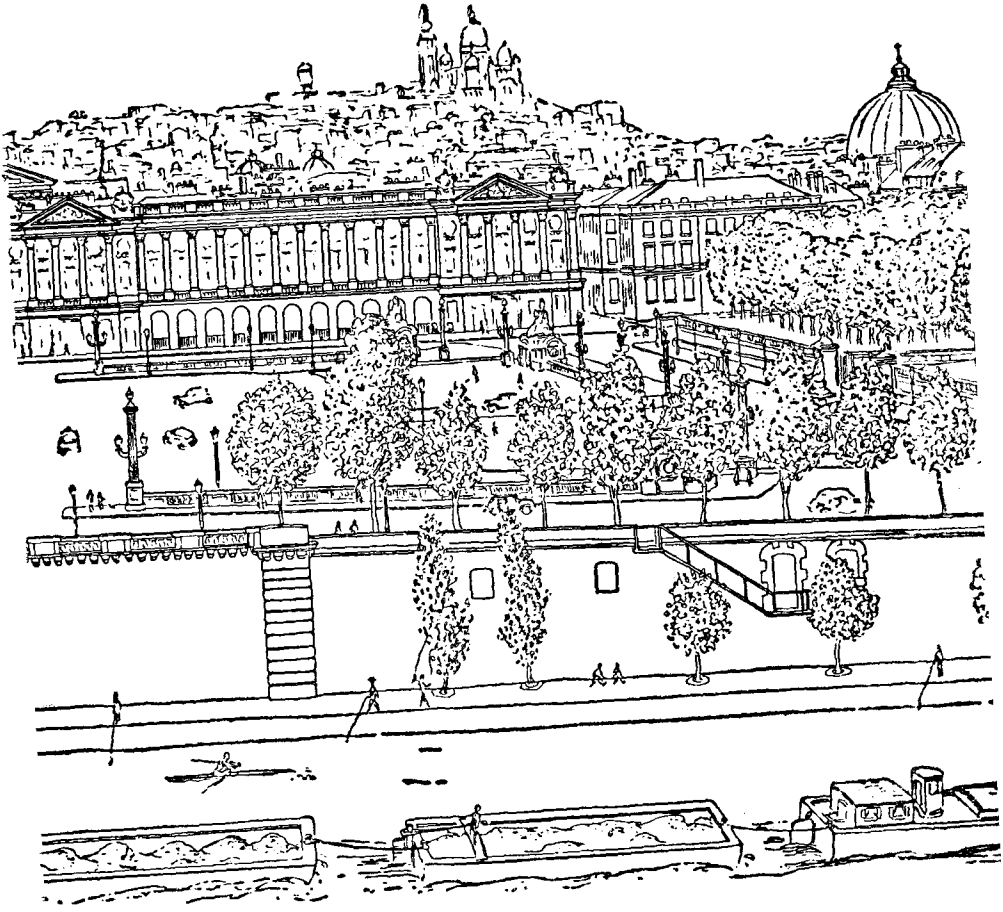

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NUMBER

Cover by James Bishop

Contents Page and "The Guest" illustrations by Gregory Masurovsky

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A Pastoral

from The Giant Dwarves

by Gisela Elsner

My mother shook herself and scratched herself. We walked along a narrow path, through meadows with yellow flowers alternating with fields, perhaps wheat fields.

"There," said my father, pointing his stick horizontally away from himself at a second forest that looked like the first, which I had taken for a fir or a pine forest or an evergreen forest of some other kind, "there we can rest."

I saw peasants standing in Sunday clothes at the backs of their fields. Their legs, their stomachs, were covered by the grain. They were giving worried looks, now up to heaven, now down at their fields.

"There's a storm coming up," they called out to each other.

Our shadows kept getting less and less visible on the path. I looked down, to make sure I didn't bump into a stone. Meanwhile the heel of my right foot was hurting just as badly as the heel of my left. And whenever my mother stumbled, turned her ankle, stood still with her lips squeezed tight, it was hard for me to decide which foot I should put forward, which I should burden with the main weight of my body.

"Isn't it beautiful here," said my father.

"All right, all right," murmured my mother.

"Stand up straight! Breathe deeply!" said my father to me. "Don't hobble around like an old woman!"

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At the edge of the second forest my mother sat down in her green suit on the green meadow, her back to the forest, her face to the sun. And while she pulled off her shoes I sat down next to her, and while I pulled off my shoes my father took the rucksack off his back and then sat down next to me.

We sat that way, in a row, our backs to the forest, our faces to the sun as it came through the gray clouds, and we ate and we drank what we had brought with us.

When my father wasn't looking, I cautiously felt my heels, I tried to pull off my socks. "It's incomprehensible," my father cried then. "There he is with his hands at his feet again! Don't act that way!" After a few unsuccessful tries I pulled my shoes back on. My feet were so swollen that it was hard for me to squeeze them in. "I've got to go," I said, and I limped off into the woods with loose shoelaces and twisted toes.

Except for two bicycles at the edge of the forest, a woman's bicycle and a man's, which were leaning against each other so as not to fall over, I saw nothing at first that doesn't belong in a forest. I went over to one of the few bushes so that I could examine my feet in peace. As I walked, I kept turning around toward my parents. They were sitting motionless, their backs turned to me. In their green and brown clothes they hardly stood out from the woods. I heard a rustle behind the bush. Between the leaves I saw something gray rising and falling and rising, in regular succession. I crept around the bushes. Behind it a man and a woman lay on top of each other, as though there weren't room enough in this forest for two. They lay stomach to stomach, the man on top, the woman underneath. The man, in a gray coat and gray trousers, was completely visible from behind. And because he was taller than she, and because he was broader than she, he covered the body of the woman. The woman stretched out her naked arms and legs as far away from herself as she could. Motionless and without even making an effort to shake him off, and only now and again moving her legs, covered with mosquitoes and mosquito bites, or her arms, covered with mosquitoes and mosquito bites, and doing that over his back, moving

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them toward each other in order to scratch herself, she held up the weight of the man. Her head laid on the side, her face turned away, she was looking between the trees into the distance, without the slightest trace of anger or irritation, not even with any surprise, but as though the whole thing were none of her concern, as though it were customary to lie on top of each other in a forest that a whole village could have fitted into. It's true that the burden was not so heavy seen from the side as it was from behind. Because on his underside the man lay with his legs on the ground between the legs of the woman. Because on top, to the right and the left, next to the shoulders of the woman, the man pushed his outstretched arms against the ground. In that way only their two stomachs were touching. From the stomachs upward, the nearer it came to the heads, the distance between them grew greater and greater. The only thing connecting their torsos was a necktie hanging down out of the man's coat. Their heads were separated from each other by the width of two heads.

The man raised and lowered and raised his behind without let-up. With a red face and red-streaked eyes he goggled past the woman's head toward the forest floor. He was panting so hard that someone who wasn't looking at him might have thought he was the one who had to bear the burden.

"There's someone there again," said the woman.

"That ruins the whole thing!" said the man breathlessly. He looked at me over his shoulder with a funny expression, his behind pulled in and not moving. "Get out of here, you brat!" he cried. "I'm not going to start in all over again just because of you!"

He had hardly called this out when I heard hurried footsteps behind me. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, looking over there!" cried my father, and with both hands seized hold of my neck and turned it around so that I was looking in the opposite direction with a twisted neck. My mother stood spinach-green between the trees, looking into her handbag with her face lowered and turned away. My father, without giving me time to turn around, his hands on my neck, yanked me toward her. And as I was walking backward, my eyes

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looking forward, my father was walking forward, his eyes looking backward.

"Why don't you lie down right on the path!" he called out. "Then people can see you a long way off!"

"Anyone who looks," the man called out, quite out of breath, "has only himself to blame! When you get down to it, you have a choice between four points of the compass, and you can always look at the sky if the view everywhere else gets on your nerves!"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself!" my father called out.

"Get off," said the woman. "I've had enough now."

"You don't have to tell me that twice!" cried the man. I heard a rustle.

"They're not the least bit ashamed of showing their piggishness in broad daylight!" cried my father.

"Don't think about it don't," said my mother. She walked on slowly.

"I suppose you never unbuttoned your pants, either," cried the man. "You manufactured that brat of yours by hand, I suppose!"

"It'll be a long time," cried the woman to the clatter of a bicycle driving off, "before you get on top of me again!"

The man gave a nasty laugh.

"You're not going to get anyone on top of you so quick," he cried. "Leave that to me. Do you think it's any fun when a girl doesn't even resist, when a girl just lies down without the least objection, lies there motionless like a paralytic, doesn't budge the least bit, doesn't make the slightest noise!"

As we caught up with my mother, the man was riding off on his bicycle. My father let go of my neck. The rucksack hung limply down his back. My mother turned her red face toward the path.

"What," I said and was going to ask what the man and the woman had been doing.

"Shut up!" said my father.

"They were doing something," said my mother, "that is not done!" Then my parents walked on even faster than before.

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Beyond this second forest there were more meadows with yellow flowers and grain fields, maybe wheat fields. The path ran on toward a third forest, a fir or pine forest, like the first and the second forests.

The pain in my heels had spread evenly over my feet. They ached and burned and hung so hot, so heavy, that it was hard for me to lift them up, so that I often kicked stones.

"Take a look around you!" said my father. "The landscape is full of change."

And I looked around on all sides, though one side would have been enough. Because all around the same thing was repeated with tiny variations. These yellowish-green meadows were followed by these greenish-yellow fields followed by these brownish-green, these more or less light woods always so easily seen through that I could make out the meadows and fields and meadows on the other side.

"There," said my father pointing to the left, holding his stick out flat, "there you can see Field Mountain in clear weather."

My mother and I, we looked off to the left at once. But between the meadows, fields, woods, and the gray clouds that were now covering the sky without a break I saw only the red-tiled roofs of a village and between the roofs the big round crowns of green trees, maybe oaks or ashes or beeches. I didn't know. I didn't want to know, either.

And behind Field Mountain, said my father, still holding his stick out flat, "you can see Pine Mountain in especially clear weather."

My mother and I, we looked off to the left at once. But the view was unchanged.

"Will you put a pleasant look on you facer!" cried my father. He knocked his stick against the ground.

And with a pleasant expression I looked past my father in front, past my father in back, into my father's sports coat, toward the direction in which in especially clear weather you could make out two mountains in a row, looked pleasantly at the clouds, at the roofs, at the peasants, black figures, dwarfed

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more and more the further away they were, moving toward the village. The smaller they became, the nearer they got to the village, the more loudly the farm dogs yelped. It was a mixture of the high-pitched yapping of the little curs, which would bark hoarsely, pant, soon break off and then only now and then start up yowling again, and the tireless, deep howling interrupted only by growls, of the great watchdogs. The yelping was drowned out by the bell strokes of the church clock, it was probably after noon. It kept getting darker. This side of the village the peasants walked over a bridge. They passed one hand along the railing, with the other they held on to their hats. The wind blew the grass, the grain, the treetops to the left.

—TRANSLATED BY JOEL CARMICHAEL

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MOTHER

If I seem to patronize and always limit what I say
to the clichés of affection, mother,
and never give a good goddamn what you are doing:
but boast instead
how I will rake $10,000 in this year;
and with crude, belligerent hints, propped by "proofs"
from analysis and common sense,
throw my sex life in your face;
and if I never kiss you anymore

and break our Tuesday dinner dates too often:
it is because I can still remember
sprawling on your bed, reciting the litany
of the Virgin Mary with you,
even after I'd begun to shave.
And can remember temper tantrums, pulverizing your bedroom mirror
with a bottle of perfume; or prying in
your dresser drawers, exploring
for blue brassieres; or gnawing nails to nubs

or getting stoned drunk when you dated after father died.
This morning, mother, I saw an alley cat
gently flop to rub its spine against the fountain
in pintsized Goudy park
a block from the Ambassador Hotel.
Two days ago, a batch of pigeons scrimmaged in the grass
to peck stale crumbs scattered from
a Wedgewood plate by one of those
horsey-looking ladies who live on Astor Street.

Today, the pigeons roosting in the sycamore above,
cat nonchalantly ambling under.
Suddenly cat zips up the trunk of the tree and
with a roundhouse swipe
almost claws a pigeon as it bolts;

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then, dazed, dangles, and with a moist tongue mops its paw;
snakes down the trunk, slips, rakes
at a batch of leaves, misses,
tumbles six feet down; but balloons its body

to land without a scratch. Then stalks agilely away,
without a look, into the shrubbery.
—You talk a lot about religion now.
Remember, mother, Mary,
our maid from Connemara, that afternoon,
snow gouging against the windowpane, when she bawled but
stubbornly refused to make the bed
on which your best friend
and her Monseignor had just thrashed about,

making a mess of it. Even now, after I have made it
with one woman or another,
a line from our old litany goes jagging through my head—
"Tower of Ivory: pray for us.
House of Gold: pray for us. Mother most pure:
pray for us. Mother Undefiled: pray for us. Pray for us.
Virgin most pure: pray for us. Pray.
Holy Mary, mother of God,
pray for us sinners now and at the hour

Of our death. Amen." Nothing colder than this snow
of memory. How many years
did I drag myself out to the Dominicans to bitch
with them about the Church,
asking for proof my body was corrupt?
Still, fat Aquinas put his finger on it when he insisted
in his *Summa* that incest was actually infantile:
an avarice of the emotions.
He knew the heart for the famished cat it is.

—PAUL CARROLL

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Three Poems by John Wieners

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING

I am one of those tainted, corrupted ones
who got green bile stuck in her throat,
who cant even speak,
the Muse wont ever leave her
that this New England puritan aristocracy
renaissance is death
drunkeness practiced here as never before

slavery means despair, but where are the chains
for us white people to wear, who have got
no class in our hair?

To Steve Jonas
who gave me his heart
to write this with

THE SPOILED SON

I have built a world for myself
slowly, and without design
of flowers and paintings from other times,

Out of buttons and gold frames,
smiling faces of poets.
I have ignored the coughs of my parents

from darkened rooms; and within
I have erected structures that withstand time.
I walk there in frozen sunlight.

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Arrange books and hold conversations with angels.
I tempt young men
and plan festivities far overseas.

I hear doors open and close,
I do not go near them
but wait for the world to disclose

New arrangements, new order of flowers,
new mail to open. My sister hears
the conversations I hold and walks away

with the moon in her arms. I do not trail after
but accept the footstep on the stair,
the whisper in the dark,

the new arriving of innumerable cracklings in the night.

SOUNDS IN THE NIGHT

Sea birds over the river
Hover in my dreams at night.

The light burns until dawn
Then disappears when I was born

At 5:45 in the morning.
I wonder if sea birds cried that night

in my mother's ears.
I only know they are the sound one hears now.

Along with the plane overhead
And the solitary whispering of the dead.

Plus an occasional car
Or truck far-off.

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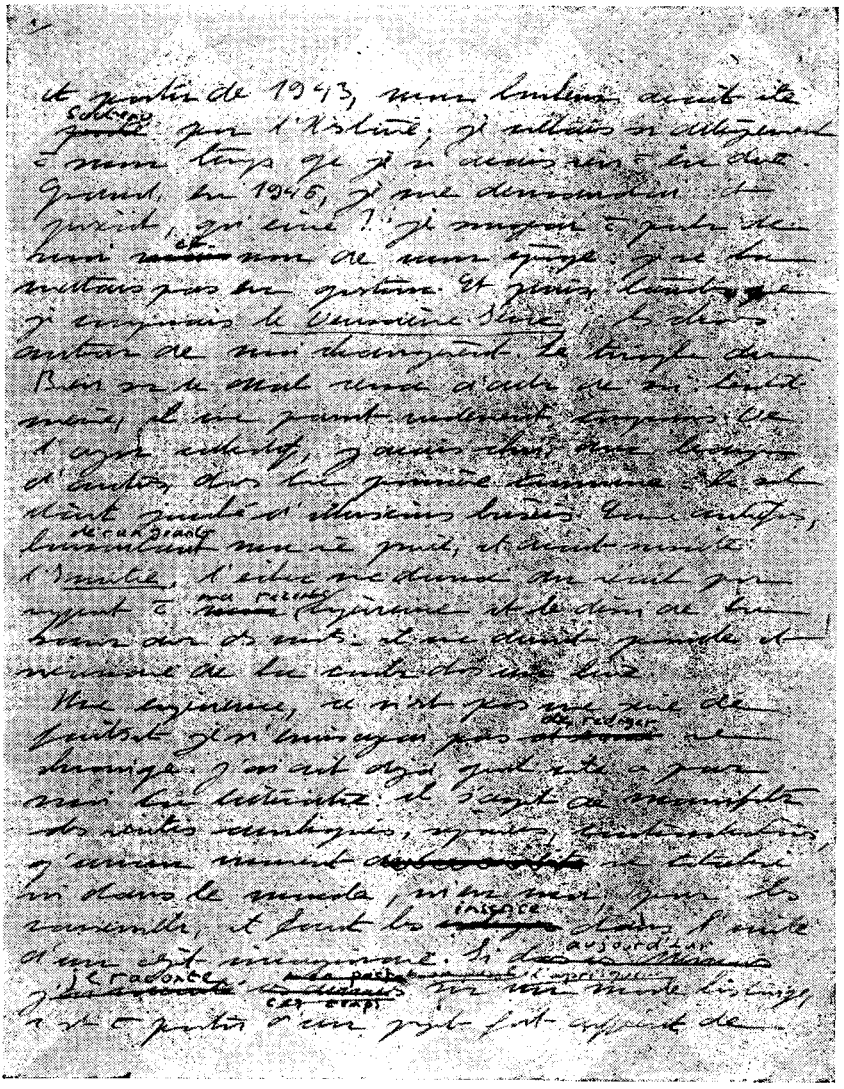

MSS. Page from La Force des Choses

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The Art of Fiction XXXV

Simone de Beauvoir

An Interview

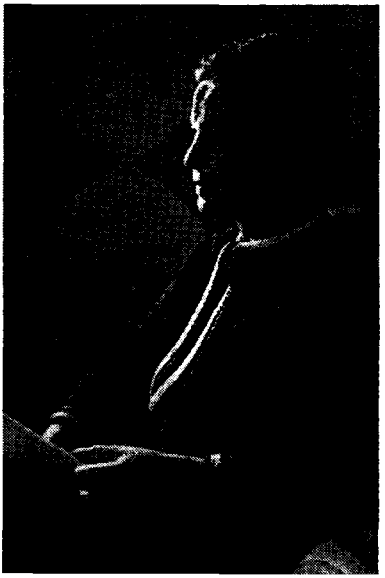

Photo by Gisèle Freund

Simone de Beauvoir had previously introduced me to Jean Genêt and Jean-Paul Sartre, whom I had interviewed. But she hesitated about being interviewed herself: "Why should we talk about me? Dont't you think I've done enough in my three books of memoirs?" It took several letters and conversations to convince her to be interviewed, and then only on the condition "that it wouldn't be too long."

The interview took place in Miss de Beauvoir's studio on rue Schoëlcher, in Montparnasse, a five-minute walk from Sartre's apartment. We worked in a large, sunny room which serves as her study and sitting room. Shelves are crammed with surprisingly uninteresting books. "The best ones," she told me, "are in the hands of my friends and never come back." The tables are covered with colorful objects brought back from her travels, but the only valuable work in the room is a sculpture given to her by Giacometti. Scattered throughout the room are dozens of phonograph records, one of the few luxuries which Miss de Beauvoir permits herself.

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Apart from her classically-featured face, what strikes one about Simone de Beauvoir is her fresh, rosy complexion and her clear, blue eyes, extremely young and lively. One gets the impression that she knows and sees everything; this inspires a certain timidity. Her speech is rapid, her manner direct without being brusque, and she is rather smiling and friendly.

INTERVIEWER

For the last seven years you've been writing your *Memoires*, in which you frequently wonder about your vocation and your profession. I have the impression that it was the loss of religious faith that turned you toward writing.

DE BEAUVOIR

It's very hard to review one's past without cheating a little. My desire to write goes far back. I wrote stories at the age of eight, but lots of children do the same. That doesn't really mean they have a vocation for writing. It may be that in my case the vocation was accentuated because I had lost religious faith; it's also true that when I read books that moved me deeply, such as George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*, I wanted terribly much to be, like her, someone whose books would be read, whose books would move readers.

INTERVIEWER

Have you been influenced by English literature?

DE BEAUVOIR

The study of English has been one of my passions ever since childhood. There's a body of children's literature in English far more charming than what exists in French. I loved to read *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan*, George Eliot, and even Rosamund Lehman.

INTERVIEWER

Dust?

DE BEAUVOIR

I had a real passion for that book. And yet it was rather

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mediocre. The girls of my generation adored it. The author was very young, and every girl recognized herself in Judy. The book was rather clever, even rather subtle. As for me, I envied English university life. I lived at home. I didn't have a room of my own. In fact, I had nothing at all. And though that life wasn't free, it did allow for privacy and seemed to me magnificent. The author had known all the myths of adolescent girls—handsome boys with an air of mystery about them and so on. Later, of course, I read the Brontës and the books of Virginia Woolf: *Orlando*, *Mrs. Dalloway*. I don't care much for *The Waves*, but I'm very very fond of her book on Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

INTERVIEWER

What about her journal?

DE BEAUVOIR

It interests me less. It's too literary. It's fascinating, but it's foreign to me. She's too concerned with whether she'll be published, with what people will say about her. I liked very much "A Room of One's Own" in which she talks about the situation of women. It's a short essay, but it hits the nail on the head. She explains very well why women can't write. Virginia Woolf is one of the woman writers who has interested me most. Have you seen any photos of her? An extraordinarily lonely face... in a way, she interests me more than Colette. Colette is, after all, very involved in her little love affairs, in household matters, laundry, pets. Virginia Woolf is much broader.

INTERVIEWER

Did you read her books in translation?

DE BEAUVOIR

No, in English. I read English better than I speak it.

INTERVIEWER

What do you think about college and university education for a writer? You yourself were a brilliant student at the

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Sorbonne and people expected you to have a brilliant career as a teacher.

DE BEAUVOIR

My studies gave me only a very superficial knowledge of philosophy but sharpened my interest in it. I benefited greatly from being a teacher, that is, from being able to spend a great deal of time reading, writing and educating myself. In those days, teachers didn't have a very heavy program. My studies gave me a solid foundation because in order to pass the state exams you have to explore areas which you wouldn't bother about if you were concerned only with general culture. They provided me with a certain academic method which was useful when I wrote *The Second Sex* and which has been useful, in general, for all my studies. I mean a way of going through books very quickly, of seeing which works are important, of classifying them, of being able to reject those which are unimportant, of being able to summarize, to browse.

INTERVIEWER

Were you a good teacher?

DE BEAUVOIR

I don't think so, because I was interested only in the bright students and not at all in the others, whereas a good teacher should be interested in everyone. But if you teach philosophy you can't help it. There were always four or five students who did all the talking, and the others didn't care to do anything. I didn't bother about them very much.

INTERVIEWER

You had been writing for ten years before you were published, at the age of thirty-six. Weren't you discouraged?

DE BEAUVOIR

No, because in my time it was unusual to be published when you were very young. Of course, there were one or two examples, such as Radiguet, who was a prodigy. Sartre

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himself wasn't published until he was about thirty-five, when *Nausea* and *The Wall* were brought out. When my first more or less publishable book was rejected, I was a bit discouraged. And when the first version of *She Came to Stay* was rejected, it was very unpleasant. Then I thought that I ought to take my time. I knew many examples of writers who were slow in getting started. And people always spoke of the case of Stendhal, who didn't begin to write until he was forty.

INTERVIEWER

Were you influenced by any American writers when you wrote your early novels?

DE BEAUVOIR

In writing *She Came to Stay*, I was certainly influenced by Hemingway insofar as it was he who taught us a certain simplicity of dialogue and the importance of the little things in life.

INTERVIEWER

Do you draw up a very precise plan when you write a novel?

DE BEAUVOIR

I haven't, you know, written a novel in ten years, during which time I've been working on my memoirs. When I wrote *The Mandarins*, for example, I created characters and an atmosphere around a given theme, and little by little the plot took shape. But in general I start writing a novel long before working out the plot.

INTERVIEWER

People say that you have great self-discipline and that you never let a day go by without working. At what time do you start?

DE BEAUVOIR

I'm always in a hurry to get going, though in general I

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dislike starting the day. I first have tea and then, at about ten o'clock, I get under way and work until one. Then I see my friends and after that, at five o'clock, I go back to work and continue until nine. I have no difficulty in picking up the thread in the afternoon. When you leave, I'll read the paper or perhaps go shopping. Most often it's a pleasure to work.

INTERVIEWER

When do you see Sartre?

DE BEAUVOIR

Every evening and often at lunch time. I generally work at his place in the afternoon.

INTERVIEWER

Doesn't it bother you to go from one apartment to another?

DE BEAUVOIR

No. Since I don't write scholarly books, I take all my papers with me and it works out very well.

INTERVIEWER

Do you plunge in immediately?

DE BEAUVOIR

It depends to some extent on what I'm writing. If the work is going well, I spend a quarter or half an hour reading what I wrote the day before, and I make a few corrections. Then I continue from there. In order to pick up the thread I have to read what I've done.

INTERVIEWER

Do your writer friends have the same habits as you?

DE BEAUVOIR

No, it's quite a personal matter. Genêt, for example, works quite differently. He puts in about twelve hours a day for six

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months when he's working on something and when he has finished he can let six months go by without doing anything. As I said, I work every day except for two or three months of vacation when I travel and generally don't work at all. I read very little during the year, and when I go away I take a big valise full of books, books which I didn't have time to read. But if the trip lasts a month or six weeks, I do feel uncomfortable, particularly if I'm between two books. I get bored if I don't work.

INTERVIEWER

Are your original manuscripts always in longhand? Who deciphers them? Nelson Algren says that he's one of the few people who can read your handwriting.

DE BEAUVOIR

I don't know how to type, but I do have two typists who manage to decipher what I write. When I work on the last version of a book, I copy the manuscript. I'm very careful. I make a great effort. My writing is fairly legible.

INTERVIEWER

In *The Blood of Others* and *All Men are Mortal* you deal with the problem of time. Were you influenced, in this respect, by Joyce or Faulkner?

DE BEAUVOIR

No, it was a personal preoccupation. I've always been keenly aware of the passing of time. I've always thought that I was old. Even when I was twelve, I thought it was awful to be thirty. I felt that something was lost. At the same time, I was aware of what I could gain, and certain periods of my life have taught me a great deal. But, in spite of everything, I've always been haunted by the passing of time and by the fact that death keeps closing in on us. For me, the problem of time is linked up with that of death, with the thought that we inevitably draw closer and closer to it, with the horror of decay. It's that, rather than the fact that things disintegrate,

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that love peters out. That's horrible too, though I personally have never been troubled by it. There's always been great continuity in my life. I've always lived in Paris, more or less in the same neighborhoods. My relationship with Sartre has lasted a very long time. I have very old friends whom I continue to see. So it's not that I've felt that time breaks things up, but rather the fact that I always take my bearings. I mean the fact that I have so many years behind me, so many ahead of me. I count them.

INTERVIEWER

In the second part of your memoirs, you draw a portrait of Sartre at the time he was writing *Nausea*. You picture him as being obsessed by what he calls his "crabs," by anguish. You seem to have been, at the time, the joyous member of the couple. Yet, in your novels you reveal a preoccupation with death that we never find in Sartre.

DE BEAUVOIR

But remember what he says in *The Words*. That he never felt the imminence of death, whereas his fellow-students—for example, Nizan, the author of *Aden Arabia*—were fascinated by it. In a way, Sartre felt he was immortal. He had staked everything on his literary work and on the hope that his work would survive, whereas for me, owing to the fact that my personal life will disappear, I'm not the least bit concerned about whether my work is likely to last. I've always been deeply aware that the ordinary things of life disappear, one's day to day activities, one's impressions, one's past experiences. Sartre thought that life could be caught in a trap of words, and I've always felt that words weren't life itself but a reproduction of life, of something dead, so to speak.

INTERVIEWER

That's precisely the point. Some people claim that you haven't the power to transpose life in your novels. They insinuate that your characters are copied from the people around you.

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DE BEAUVOIR

I don't know. What is the imagination? In the long run, it's a matter of attaining a certain degree of generality, of truth about what is, about what one actually lives. Works which aren't based on reality don't interest me unless they're out and out extravagant, for example the novels of Alexandre Dumas or of Victor Hugo, which are epics of a kind. But I don't call "made-up" stories works of the imagination but rather works of artifice. If I wanted to defend myself, I could refer to Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, all the characters of which were taken from real life.

INTERVIEWER

Let's go back to your characters. How do you choose their names?

DE BEAUVOIR

I don't consider that very important. I chose the name Xavière in *She Came to Stay* because I had met only one person who had that name. When I look for names, I use the telephone directory or try to remember the names of former pupils.

INTERVIEWER

To which of your characters are you most attached?

DE BEAUVOIR

I don't know. I think that I'm interested less in the characters themselves than in their relationships, whether it be a matter of love or friendship. It was the critic Claude Roy who pointed that out.

INTERVIEWER

In every one of your novels we find a female character who is misled by false notions and who is threatened by madness.

DE BEAUVOIR

Lots of modern women are like that. Women are obliged

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to play at being what they aren't, to play, for example, at being great courtesans, to fake their personalities. They're on the brink of neurosis. I feel very sympathetic toward women of that type. They interest me more than the well-balanced housewife and mother. There are, of course, women who interest me even more, those who are both true and independent, who work and create.

INTERVIEWER

None of your female characters are immune from love. You like the romantic element.

DE BEAUVOIR

Love is a great privilege. Real love, which is very rare, enriches the lives of the men and women who experience it.

INTERVIEWER

In your novels, it seems to be the women—I'm thinking of Françoise in *She Came to Stay* and Anne in *The Mandarins*—who experience it most.

DE BEAUVOIR

The reason is that, despite everything, women give more of themselves in love because most of them don't have much else to absorb them. Perhaps they're also more capable of deep sympathy, which is the basis of love. Perhaps it's also because I can project myself more easily into women than into men. My female characters are much richer than my male characters.

INTERVIEWER

You've never created an independent and really free female character who illustrates in one way or other the thesis of *The Second Sex*. Why?

DE BEAUVOIR

I've shown women as they are, as divided human beings, and not as they ought to be.

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INTERVIEWER

After your long novel, *The Mandarins*, you stopped writing fiction and began to work on your memoirs. Which of these two literary forms do you prefer?

DE BEAUVOIR

I like both of them. They offer different kinds of satisfaction and disappointment. In writing my memoirs, it's very agreeable to be backed up by reality. On the other hand, when one follows reality from day to day, as I have, there are certain depths, certain kinds of myth and meaning that one disregards. In the novel, however, one can express these horizons, these overtones of daily life, but there's an element of fabrication which is nevertheless disturbing. One should aim at inventing without fabricating. I had been wanting to talk about my childhood and youth for a long time. I had maintained very deep relationships with them, but there was no sign of them in any of my books. Even before writing my first novel, I had a desire to have, as it were, a heart-to-heart talk. It was a very emotional, a very personal need. After *The Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter* I was unsatisfied, and then I thought of doing something else. But I was unable to. I said to myself, "I've fought to be free. What have I done with my freedom, what's become of it?" I wrote the sequel that carried me from the age of twenty-one to the present time, from *The Prime of life* to *Force of Circumstance*—

INTERVIEWER

At the meeting of writers in Formentor a few years ago, Carlo Levi described *The Prime of Life* as "the great love story of the century." Sartre appeared for the first time as a human being. You revealed a Sartre who had not been rightly understood, a man very different from the legendary Sartre.

DE BEAUVOIR

I did it intentionally. He didn't want me to write about him. Finally, when he saw that I spoke about him the way I did, he gave me a free hand.

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INTERVIEWER

In your opinion, why is it that, despite the reputation he's had for twenty years, Sartre the writer remains misunderstood and is still violently attacked by critics?

DE BEAUVOIR

For political reasons. Sartre is a man who has violently opposed the class into which he was born and which therefore regards him as a traitor. But that's the class which has money, which buys books. Sartre's situation is paradoxical. He's an anti-bourgeois writer who is read by the bourgeoisie and admired by it as one of its products. The bourgeoisie has a monopoly on culture and thinks that it gave birth to Sartre. At the same time, it hates him because he attacks it.

INTERVIEWER

In an interview with Hemingway in *The Paris Review*, he said, "All you can be sure about, in a political-minded writer, is that if his work should last, you will have to skip the politics when you read it." Of course, you don't agree. Do you still believe in "commitment"?

DE BEAUVOIR

Hemingway was precisely the type of writer who never wanted to commit himself. I know that he was involved in the Spanish Civil War, but as a journalist. Hemingway was never deeply committed, so he thinks that what is eternal in literature is what isn't dated, isn't committed. I don't agree. In the case of many writers, it's also their political stand which makes me like or dislike them. There aren't many writers of former times whose work was really committed. And although one reads Rousseau's *Social Contract* as eagerly as one reads his *Confessions*, one no longer reads *The New Héloïse*.

INTERVIEWER

The heyday of existentialism seems to have been the period from the end of the war to 1952. At the present time, the "new novel" is in fashion; and such writers as Drieu La Rochelle and Roger Nimier.

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DE BEAUVOIR

There's certainly a return to the right in France. The new novel itself isn't reactionary, nor are its authors. A sympathizer can say that they want to do away with certain bourgeois conventions. These writers aren't disturbing. In the long run, Gaullism brings us back to Pétainism, and it's only to be expected that a collaborator like Drieu La Rochelle and an extreme reactionary like Nimier be held in high esteem again. The bourgeoisie is showing itself again in its true colors, that is, as a reactionary class. Look at the success of Sartre's *The Words*. There are several things to note. It's perhaps—I won't say his best book, but one of his best. At any rate, it's an excellent book, an exciting display of virtuosity, an amazingly written work. At the same time, the reason it has had such success is that it's a book which is not "committed." When the critics say that it's his best book, along with *Nausea*, one should bear in mind that *Nausea* is an early work, a work which is not committed, and that it is more readily accepted by the left and right alike than are his plays. The same thing happened to me with *The Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*. Bourgeois women were delighted to recognize their own youth in it. The protests began with *The Prime of Life* and continued with *Force of Circumstance*. The break is very clear, very sharp.

INTERVIEWER

The last part of *Force of Circumstance* is devoted to the Algerian war, to which you seem to have reacted in a very personal way.

DE BEAUVOIR

I felt and thought about things in a political way, but I never engaged in political action. The entire last part of *Force of Circumstance* deals with the war. And it seems anachronistic in a France which is no longer concerned with that war.

INTERVIEWER

Didn't you realize that people were bound to forget about it?

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DE BEAUVOIR

I deleted lots of pages from that section. I therefore realized that it would be anachronistic. On the other hand, I absolutely wanted to talk about it, and I'm amazed that people have forgotten it to such a degree. Have you seen the film *La Belle Vie*, by the young director Robert Enrico? People are stupefied because the film shows the Algerian war. Claude Mauriac wrote in '*Le Figaro Litteraire*': "Why is it that we're shown parachute troopers on public squares. It's not true to life." But it is true to life. I used to see them every day from Sartre's window at Saint Germain des Prés. People have forgotten. They wanted to forget. They wanted to forget their memories. That's the reason why, contrary to what I expected, I wasn't attacked for what I said about the Algerian war but for what I said about old age and death. As regards the Algerian war, all Frenchmen are now convinced that it never took place, that nobody was tortured, that insofar as there was torture they were always against torture.

INTERVIEWER

At the end of *Foree of Ctrumstance* you say: "As I look back with incredulity at that credulous adolescent, I am astounded to see how I was swindled." This remark seems to have given rise to all kinds of misunderstandings.

DE BEAUVOIR

People—particularly enemies—have tried to interpret it to mean that my life has been a failure, either because I recognize the fact that I was mistaken on a political level or because I recognize that after all a woman should have had children, etc. Anyone who reads my book carefully can see that I say the very opposite, that I don't envy anyone, that I'm perfectly satisfied with what my life has been, that I've kept all my promises and that consequently if I had my life to live over again I wouldn't live it any differently. I've never regretted not having children insofar as what I wanted to do was to write.

Then why "swindled"? When one has an existentialist

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view of the world, like mine, the paradox of human life is precisely that one tries to *be* and, in the long run, merely exists. It's because of this discrepancy that when you've laid your stake on being—and, in a way you always do when you make plans, even if you actually know that you can't succeed in being—when you turn around and look back on your life, you see that you've simply existed. In other words, life isn't behind you like a solid thing, like the life of a god (as it is conceived, that is, as something impossible). Your life is simply a human life.

So one might say, as Alain did, and I'm very fond of that remark, "nothing is promised us." In one sense, it's true. In another, it's not. Because a bourgeois boy or girl who is given a certain culture is actually promised things. I think that anyone who had a hard life when he was young won't say in later years that he's been "swindled." But when I say that I've been swindled I'm referring to the seventeen-year-old girl who daydreamed in the country near the hazel-bush about what she was going to do later on. I've done everything I wanted to do, writing books, learning about things, but I've been swindled all the same because it's never anything more. There are also Mallermé's lines about "the perfume of sadness that remains in the heart," I forget exactly how they go. I've had what I wanted, and, when all is said and done, what one wanted was always something else. A woman psychoanalyst wrote me a very intelligent letter in which she said that "in the last analysis, desires always go far beyond the object of desire." The fact is that I've had everything I desired, but the "far beyond" which is included in the desire itself is not attained when the desire has been fulfilled. When I was young, I had hopes and a view of life which all cultured people and bourgeois optimists encourage one to have and which my readers accuse me of not encouraging in them. That's what I meant, and I wasn't regretting anything I've done or thought.

INTERVIEWER

Some people think that a longing for God underlies your works.

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DE BEAUVOIR

No. Sartre and I have always said that it's not because there's a desire to *be* that this desire corresponds to any reality. It's exactly what Kant said on the intellectual level. The fact that one believes in causalities is no reason to believe that there is a supreme cause. The fact that man has a desire to be does not mean that he can ever attain being or even that being is a possible notion, at any rate the being that is a reflection and at the same time an existence. There is a synthesis of existence and being which is impossible. Sartre and I have always rejected it, and this rejection underlies our thinking. There is an emptiness in man, and even his achievements have this emptiness. That's all. I don't mean that I haven't achieved what I wanted to achieve but rather that the achievement is never what people think it is. Furthermore, there is a naïve or snobbish aspect, because people imagine that if you have succeeded on a social level you must be perfectly satisfied with the human conditon in general. But that's not the case.

"I'm swindled" also implies something else, namely that life has made me discover the world as it is, that is, a world of suffering and oppression, of undernourishment for the majority of people, things which I didn't know when I was young and when I imagined that to discover the world was to discover something beautiful. In that respect, too, I was swindled by bourgeois culture, and that's why I don't want to contribute to the swindling of others and why I say that I was swindled, in short, so that others aren't swindled. It's really also a problem of a social kind. In short, I discovered the unhappiness of the world little by little, then more and more, and finally, above all, I felt it in connection with the Algerian war and when I traveled.

INTERVIEWER

Some critics and readers have felt that you spoke about old age in an unpleasant way.

DE BEAUVOIR

A lot of people didn't like what I said because they want

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to believe that all periods of life are delightful, that children are innocent, that all newlyweds are happy, that all old people are serene. I've rebelled against such notions all my life, and there's no doubt about the fact that the moment, which for me is not old age but the beginning of old age, represents—even if one has all the resources one wants, affection, work to be done—represents a change in one's existence, a change which is manifested by the loss of a great number of things. If one isn't sorry to lose them it's because one didn't love them. I think that people who glorify old age or death too readily are people who really don't love life. Of course, in present-day France you have to say that everything's fine, that everything's lovely, including death.

INTERVIEWER

Beckett has keenly felt the swindle of the human condition. Does he interest you more than the other "new novelists?"

DE BEAUVOIR

Certainly. All the playing around with time that one finds in the "new novel" can be found in Faulkner. It was he who taught them how to do it, and in my opinion he's the one who does it best. As for Beckett, his way of emphasizing the dark side of life is very beautiful. However, he's convinced that life is dark and only that. I too am convinced that life is dark, and at the same time I love life. But that conviction seems to have spoiled everything for him. When that's all you can say, there aren't fifty ways of saying it, and I've found that many of his works are merely repetitions of what he said earlier. *Endgame* repeats *Waiting for Godot*, but in a weaker way.

INTERVIEWER

Are there many contemporary French writers who interest you?

DE BEAUVOIR

Not many. I receive lots of manuscripts, and the annoying thing is that they're almost always bad. At the present time,

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I'm very excited about Violette Leduc. She was first published in 1946 in *Collection Espoir* which was edited by Camus. The critics praised her to the skies. Sartre, Genêt and Jouhandeau liked her very much. She never sold. She recently published a great autobiography called *The Bastard*, the beginning of which was published in '*Les Temps Modernes*,' of which Sartre is editor-in-chief. I wrote a preface to the book because I thought that she was one of the unappreciated postwar French writers. She's having great success in France at the present time.

INTERVIEWER

And how do you rank yourself among contemporary writers?

DE BEAUVOIR

I don't know. What is it that one evaluates? The noise, the silence, posterity, the number of readers, the absence of readers, the importance at a given time? I think that people will read me for some time. At least, that's what my readers tell me. I've contributed something to the discussion of women's problems. I know I have from the letters I receive. As for the literary *quality* of my work, in the strict sense of the word, I haven't the slightest idea.

—MADELEINE GOBEIL

Translated by Bernard Frechtman

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FOR COPLAND'S VITEBSK

He believes, he believes, the gray-eyed one
who puts your shards together.
(Cleft saucers are mended in Vitebsk.)
The brown-eyed one who patches your shoes
has limping fingers. His eyes too believe.
And the eyes of the flaxen-haired, the black-
braided, who move in a trance, making dainties
from wisps. Delicate-limbed, they are grateful
for love on straw beds. All of the people in Vitebsk
are awry with tenderness. Because all things
here believe. Even the threshold dust rises
upward.

The lonely look out of windows
and forget their loneliness, seeing that
they too belong to Vitebsk. The babies sprawl
about until it is time to become Cheder boys
when they will sit at rough tables learning
the aleph-bes. It is not two and two they are
putting together, it is God they are getting
to know.

Everywhere in Vitebsk one hears
a speaking and a shouting and a whispering
to God. The houses flush and pale with the
knowledge. Piously the sun bounces over
the thatched roofs. In Vitebsk there is plenty
of sky. At night the moon is sad and sometimes
comical. There are two sides to this moon.

Sometimes, unsettled by so much belief,
the unbeliever walks into the hills
and stumbles among the stars, hears
the ram's horn stubborn in the night.

—ETTA BLUM

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The Guest

Stanley Elkin

On Sunday Bertie walked into an apartment building in St. Louis, a city where, in the past, he had changed trains, waited for buses, or thought about Klaff, and where, more recently, truckers dropped him, or traveling salesmen stopped their Pontiacs downtown just long enough for him to reach into the back seat for his trumpetcase and get out. In the hallway he stood before the brass, mailboxed wall seeking the name of his friend, his friends' friend really, and his friends' friend's wife. The girl had danced with him at parties in the college town, and one night—he imagined he must have been particularly pathetic, engagingly pathetic—she had kissed him. The man, of course, patronized him, asked him questions that would have been more vicious had they been less naïve. He remembered he rather enjoyed making his long, patient answers. Condescension always brought the truth out of him. It was more appealing than indifference anyway, and more necessary to him now. He supposed he didn't care for either of them, but he couldn't go further. He had to rest or he would die.

He found the name on the mailbox—Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Feldman—the girl's identity, as he might have guessed, swallowed up in the husband's. It was no way to treat women, he thought gallantly.

He started up the stairs. Turning the corner at the second landing he saw a man, moving cautiously downward, burdened by boxes and suitcases and loose bags. Only when they were on a level with each other did Bertie, through a momentary clearing in the boxes, recognize Stephen Feldman.

"Old man, old man," Bertie said.

Illustrated by Gregory Masurovsky

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"Just a minute," Feldman said, forcing a package aside with his chin. Bertie stood, half a staircase above him, leaning against the wall. He grinned in the shadows, conscious of his ridiculous fedora, his eye patch rakishly black against the soft whiteness of his face. Black-suited, tiny, white-fleshed, he posed above Feldman, dapper as a scholarly waiter in a restaurant. He waited until he was recognized.

"Bertie? Bertie? Let me get rid of this stuff. Give me a hand, will you?" Feldman said.

"Sure," Bertie said. "It's on my family crest. One hand washing the other. Here, wait a minute." He passed Feldman on the stairs and held the door for him. He followed him outside.

"Take the key from my pocket, Bertie, and open the trunk. It's the blue convertible."

Bertie put his hand in Feldman's pocket. "You've got nice thighs," he said. To irritate Feldman he pretended to try to force the house key into the trunk lock. Feldman stood impatiently behind him, balancing his heavy burdens. "I've been to Dallas, lived in a palace," Bertie said over his shoulder. "There's this great Eskimo who blows down there. Would you believe he's cut the best side ever recorded of 'Mood Indigo?'" Bertie shook the key ring as if it were a castanet.

Feldman dumped his load on the hood of the car and took the keys from Bertie. He opened the trunk and started to throw things into it. "Going somewhere?" Bertie asked.

"Vacation," Feldman said.

"Oh," Bertie said.

Feldman looked toward the apartment house. "I've got to go up for another suitcase, Bertie."

"Sure," Bertie said.

He went up the stairs behind Feldman. About halfway up he stopped to catch his breath. Feldman watched him curiously. He pounded his chest with his tiny fist and grinned weakly. "*Mea culpa*," he said. "Mea booze. Mea sluts. Mea pot. Me-o-mea."

"Come on," Feldman said.

They went inside and Bertie heard a toilet flushing.

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Through a hall, through an open door, he saw Norma, Feldman's wife, staring absently into the bowl. "If she moves them now you won't have to stop at God knows what kind of place along the road," Bertie said brightly.

Norma lifted a big suitcase easily in her big hands and came into the living room. She stopped when she saw Bertie. "Bertie! Stephen, it's Bertie."

"We bumped into each other in the hall," Stephen said.

Bertie watched the two of them look at each other.

"You sure picked a time to come visiting, Bertie," Feldman said.

"We're leaving on our vacation, Bertie," Norma said.

"We're going up to New England for a couple of weeks," Feldman told him.

"We can chat for a little with Bertie, can't we Stephen, before we go?"

"Of course," Feldman said. He sat down and pulled the suitcase next to him.

"It's very lovely in New England." Bertie sat down and crossed his legs. "I don't get up there very regularly. Not my territory. I've found that when a man makes it in the Ivy League he tends to forget about old Bertie," he said sadly.

"What are you doing in St. Louis, Bertie?" Feldman's wife asked him.

"It's my mid-western swing," Bertie said. "I've been down south on the southern sponge. Opened up a whole new territory down there." He heard himself cackle.

"Who did you see, Bertie?" Norma asked him.

"You wouldn't know her. A cousin of Klaff's."

"Were you living with her?" Feldman asked.

Bertie shook his finger at him. The Feldmans stared glumly at each other. Stephen rubbed the plastic suitcase handle. In a moment, Bertie thought, he would probably say, "Gosh, Bertie, you should have written. You should have let us know." He should have written! Did the Fuller Brush man write? Who would be home? Who wouldn't be on vacation? They were commandos, the Fuller Brush man and he. He was tired, sick. He couldn't move on today. Would they

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kill him because of their lousy vacation?

Meanwhile the Feldmans weren't saying anything. They stared at each other openly, their large eyes in their large heads on their large necks largely. He thought he could wait them out. It was what he *should* do. It should have been the easiest thing in the world—to wait out the Feldmans, to stare them down. Who was he kidding? It wasn't his forte. He had no forte. *That* was his forte. He could already hear himself begin to speak.

"Sure," he said. "I almost married that girl. Klaff's lady cousin. The first thing she ever said to me was 'Bertie, they never build drug stores in the middle of the block. Always on corners.' It was the truth. Well, I thought, this was the woman for me. One time she came out of the ladies' john of a Greyhound bus station and she said, 'Bertie, have you ever noticed how public toilets often smell like bubble gum?' That's what it was like all the time. She had all these institutional insights. I was sure we could make it together. It didn't work out." He sighed.

Feldman stared at him but Norma was beginning to soften, Bertie thought. He wondered randomly what she would be like in bed. He looked coolly at her long legs, her wide shoulders. Like Klaff s cousin. Institutional.

"Bertie, how are your eyes now?" she asked.

"Oh," he said, "still seeing double." He smiled. "Two for one. It's all right when there's something to look at. Other times I use the patch."

Norma seemed sad.

"I have fun with it," he said. "It doesn't make any difference which eye I cover. I'm ambidextrous." He pulled the black elastic band from his forehead. Instantly there were two large Stephens, two large Normas. The four Feldmans like a troupe of Jewish acrobats. He felt surrounded. In the two living rooms his four hands fumbled with the two patches. He felt sick to his stomach. He closed one eye and hastily replaced the patch. "I shouldn't try that on an empty stomach," he said.

Feldman watched him narrowly. "Gee, Bertie," he said

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finally, "maybe we could drop you someplace."

It was out of the question. He couldn't get into a car again. "Do you go through Minneapolis, Minnesota?" he asked indifferently.

Feldman looked confused and Bertie liked him for a moment. "We were going to catch the Turnpike up around Chicago, Bertie."

"Oh, Chicago," Bertie said. "I can't go back to Chicago yet."

Feldman nodded.

"Don't you know anybody else in St. Louis?" Norma asked.

"Klaff used to live across the river, but he's gone," Bertie said.

"Look, Bertie..." Feldman said.

"I'm fagged," Bertie said helplessly, "locked out."

"Bertie," Feldman said, "do you need any money? I could let you have twenty dollars."

Bertie put his hand out mechanically.

"This is stupid," Norma said suddenly. "Stay *here*."

"Oh, well—"

"No, I mean it. Stay *here*. We'll be gone for two weeks. What difference does it make?"

Feldman looked at his wife for a moment and shrugged. "Sure," he said, "there's no reason you couldn't stay here. As a matter of fact you'd be doing us a favor. I forgot to cancel the newspaper, the milk. You'd keep the burglars off. They don't bother a place if it looks lived in." He put twenty dollars on the coffee table. "There might be something you need," he explained.

Bertie looked carefully at them both. They seemed to mean it. Feldman and his wife grinned at him steadily, relieved at how easily they had come off. He enjoyed the idea himself. At last he had a real patron, a real matron. "O.K.," he said.

"Then it's settled," Feldman said, rising.

"It's all right?" Bertie said.

"Certainly it's all right," Feldman said. "What harm could you do?"

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"I'm harmless," Bertie said.

Feldman picked up the suitcase and led his wife toward the door. "Have a good time," Bertie said, following them. "I'll watch things for you. Rrgghh! Rrrgghhhfff!"

Feldman waved back at him as he went down the stairs. "Hey," Bertie called, leaning over the banister, "did I tell you about that crazy Klaff? You know what nutty Klaff did out at U.C.L.A.? He became a second-story man." They were already down the stairs.

Bertie went back into the house. Closing the door he pressed his back against it and turned his head slowly across his left shoulder. He imagined himself photographed from underneath. "Odd man in," he said. In a moment he bounded off the door and into the center of the living room. "I'll bet there's a lease," he thought. "I'll bet there's a regular lease that goes with this place." He considered this for a moment with an awed respect. He couldn't remember ever having been in a place where the tenants actually had to sign a lease. He walked into the dining room and turned on the chandelier lights. "Sure there's a lease," Bertie said. He hugged himself. "How the fallen are mighty," he said.

He remembered his need to rest. In the living room he lay down on the couch without taking off his shoes. He sat up and pulled them off but when he lay down again he was uneasy. He had gotten out of the habit, living the way he did, of sleeping without shoes. In his friends' leaseless basements the nights were cold and he wore them for warmth. He put the shoes on again, but found he wasn't tired anymore. It was a fact that dependence gave him energy. He was never so alert as when people did him favors. It was having to be on your own that made you tired.

"Certainly," Bertie said to the committee, "it's a scientific fact. We've suspected it for years, but until our researchers divided up the town of Bloomington, Indiana, we had no proof. What our people found in that community was that the orphans and bastards were all the time sleepy and run down, but that the housewives and folks on relief were wide awake, alert, raring to go. It's remarkable. We can't positively

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state the link yet, but we're fairly certain that it's something to do with dependency in league perhaps with a particularly virulent form of —ahem— gratitude. Ahem. Ahem."

As he lectured the committee he wandered around the apartment, touring from right to left. He crossed from the living room into the dining room and turned right into the kitchen and then right again into the small room Feldman used for his study. "Here's where all the magic happens," Bertie said, glancing at the contour chair near Feldman's desk. He went back into the kitchen. "Here's where all the magic happens," he said, looking at Norma's electric stove. He stepped into the dining room and continued on, passing Norma's paintings, of picturesque little side streets in Mexico, of picturesque little side streets in Italy, of picturesque little side streets in Puerto Rico, until he came to a door that led to the back sun parlor. He went through it and found himself in a room with an easel, with paints in sexy little tubes, with brushes, with palettes and turpentine and rags. "Here's where all the magic happens," Bertie said and walked around the room to another door. He opened it and was in the Feldmans' master bedroom. He looked at the bed. "Here's where all the magic happens," he said. Through a door at the other end of the room was another small hall. On the right was the toilet. He went in and flushed it. It was one of those toilets with instantly renewable tanks. He flushed it again. And again. "The only kind to have," he said out of the side of his mouth, imagining a rental agent. "I mean it's like this. Supposing the missus has diarrhea or something. You don't want to have to wait until the tank fills up. Or suppose you're sick. Or suppose you're giving a party and it's mixed company. Well it's just corny to whistle to cover the noise, you know what I mean? 'Sjust corny. On the other hand you flush it once, suppose you're not through, then what happens? There's the damn noise after the water goes down. What have you accomplished? This way"—he reached across and jiggled the little lever and then did it a second time, a third, a fourth— "you never have any embarrassing interim, what we in the trade call 'flush lag.' "

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He came out of the bathroom and at the other end of the hall found another bedroom, smaller than the first. It was the guest bedroom and Bertie knew at once that he would never sleep in it, that he would sleep in the Feldmans' big bed.

"Nice place you got here," he said when he had finished the tour.

"Dooing de woh eet ees all I tink of, what I fahting foe," the man from the Underground said. "Here ees eet fahrproof, air-condition and safe from Nazis."

"Stay out of Volkswagens, kid," Bertie said.

Bertie went back into the living room. He wanted some music but it was a cardinal principle with him never to blow alone. He would drink alone, take drugs alone, but somehow the depths of depravity were for him represented by having to play jazz alone. He had a vision of himself in a cheap hotel room sitting on the edge of an iron bedstead. Crumpled packages of cigarettes were scattered throughout the room. Bottles of gin were on top of the Gideon Bible, the Western Union blanks. His trumpet was in his lap. "Perfect," Bertie said. "Norma Feldman could come in and paint it in a picture." Bertie shuddered.

The phonograph was in the hall between the dining and living rooms. It was a big thing, with the AM and the FM and the short wave and the place where you plugged in the color television when it was perfected. He found records in Feldman's little room and went through them rapidly. "Ahmad Jamahl for Christ's sake." He took the record out of its sleeve and broke it across his knee. He stood up slowly and kicked the fragments of the broken recording into a neat pile.

He turned around and scooped up as many of Feldman's recordings as he could carry and brought them to the machine. He piled them on indiscriminately and listened with visible, professional discomfort. He listened to *The New World Symphony*, to Beethoven's *Fifth*, to *My Fair Lady*, The Kingston Trio. The more he listened the more he began to dislike the Feldmans. When he could stand it no longer he tore the playing arm viciously away from the record and looked around him. He saw the Feldmans' bookcase.

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"I'll read," he said.

He took down the Marquis de Sade and Henry Miller and Ronald Firbank and turned the pages desultorily. Nothing happened. He tried reading aloud in front of a mirror. He went back to the bookcase and looked for *The Egg and I* and *Please Don't Eat the Daisies*. The prose of a certain kind of bright housewife always made Bertie erotic but the Feldmans owned neither book. He browsed Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* with only mild lasciviousness.

He went into their bedroom and opened the closet. He found a pair of Norma's shoes and put them on. Although he was no fetishist he had often promised himself that if he ever had the opportunity he would see what it was like. He walked around the apartment in Norma's high heels. All that happened was that he got a pain in his calves.

In the kitchen he looked into the refrigerator. There were some frozen mixed vegatables in the freezer compartment.

"I'll starve first," Bertie said.

He found a Billie Holliday record and put it on the phonograph. He hoped that Klaff out in Los Angeles was at this moment being beaten with rubber hoses by the police. He looked up at the kitchen clock. "Nine," he said. "Only seven in L.A. They probably don't start beating them up until later."

"Talk Klaff," he snarled, "or we'll drag you into the Blood Room."

"Flake off, copper," Klaff said.

"That's enough of that, Klaff. Take that and that and that."

"Bird lives," Bertie screamed suddenly, invoking the dead Charlie Parker. It was his code cry.

"Mama may have," Billie Holliday wailed, "Papa may have, But God Bless the child who's got his own, who—oo—zz—"

"Who—oo—zz," Bertie wailed.

"Got his own," Billie said.

"I'll tell him when he comes in, William," Bertie said.

Bertie waited respectfully until Billie was finished and turned off the music.

He wondered why so many people felt that Norman Mailer was the greatest living American novelist.

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He sat down on the Feldmans' coffee table and marveled at his being alone in so big and well furnished an apartment. The Feldmans were probably the most substantial people he knew. Feldman was the only one from the old crowd who might make it, he guessed. Of course he was Jewish and that helped. Some Jews swung pretty good but he always suspected that in the end they would hold out on you. But then who wouldn't, Bertie wondered. Kamikaze pilots, maybe. Anyway this was Bertie's special form of anti-semitism and he cherished it. Melvin Gimpel, for example, his old roommate. Every time Melvin tried to kill himself by sticking his head in the oven he left the kitchen window open. Bertie laughed, remembering the time he had found Gimpel on his knees with his head on the oven door, oddly like the witch in Hansel and Gretel. Bertie closed the window and shook Gimpel awake.

"Mel," he yelled, slapping him and laughing. "Mel."

"Bertie, go away. Leave me alone, I want to kill myself."

"Thank God," Bertie said. "Thank God I'm in time. When I found that window closed I thought it was all over."

"What, the window was closed? My God, was the window closed?"

"Melvin Gimpel is so simple
Thinks his nipple is a pimple," Bertie recited.

Bertie hugged his knees, and then, again, felt a wave of the nauseous sickness he had experienced that morning. "It's foreshadowing. One day as I am shoveling my walk I will collapse and die."

When the nausea left him he thought again about his situation. It was odd, he thought, being alone in so big a place. He had friends everywhere and made his way from place to place like an old time slave on the Underground Railway. For all the pathos of the figure he knew he deliberately cut, there were always people to do him favors, give him money, beer, drugs, to nurse him back to his normal state of semi-invalidism, girls to kiss him in the comforting way he liked. This was probably the first time he had been alone in months. He felt like a dog whose master has gone away for the week-

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end. Just then he heard some people coming up the stairs and he growled experimentally. He went down on his hands and knees and scampered to the door, scratching it with his nails. "Rrrgghhf," he barked. "Rrgghhfff!" He heard whoever it was fumbling to open a door on the floor below him. He smiled. "Good dog," he said. "Good dog, goodog, gudug, gudugguduggudug."

He whined. He missed his master. A tear formed in the corner of his left eye. He crawled to a full-length mirror in the bathroom. "Ahh," he said. "Ahh." Seeing the patch across his eye he had an inspiration. "Here, Patch," he called. "Come on, Patch."

He romped after his own voice.

He moved beside Norma Feldman's easel in the sun parlor. He lowered his body carefully, pushing himself slightly backwards with his arms. He yawned. He touched his chest to the wooden floor. He wagged his tail and then let himself fall heavily on one side. He pulled his legs up under him and fell asleep.

When he awoke he was hungry. He went into the kitchen but he knew nothing about cooking. He fingered the twenty dollars in his pocket that Feldman had given him. He could order out. The light in the hall where the phone and phone books were was not good, so he tore "Restaurants" from the Yellow Pages and brought the sheets with him into the living room. Only two places delivered after one a.m. It was already one-thirty. He dialed the number of a pizza place closest to him. It was busy so he dialed the other number.

"Pal, bring over a big one, half shrimp, half mushroom. And two six-packs." He gave the address. The man explained that the truck had just gone out and that he shouldn't expect delivery for at least another hour and a half.

"Put it in a cab," Bertie said. "While Bird lives Bertie spends."

He took out another dozen or so records and piled them on the machine. He sat down on the couch and drummed his trumpetcase with his fingers. He opened the case and fit the

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mouthpiece to the body of the horn. He put the trumpet to his lips and experienced the unpleasant shock of cold metal he always felt. He still thought it strange that men could mouth metal this way, ludicrous that his own official attitude should be a kiss. He blew a few bars in accompaniment to the record and put the trumpet back in the case. He felt in the side pockets of the trumpetcase and took out two pair of dirty underwear, some handkerchiefs and three pair of socks. He unrolled one of the pairs of socks and saw with pleasure that the drug was still there. He took out the bottle of carbon tetrachloride. This was what he cleaned his instrument with. It was what he would use to kill himself when he had finally made the decision.

He held the bottle to the light. "If nothing turns up," he said, "I'll drink this. And to hell with the kitchen window."

The cab driver brought the pizza and Bertie gave him the twenty dollars.

"I can't change that," the driver said.

"Did I ask you to change it?" Bertie said.

"That's twenty bucks there."

"Bird lives. Easy come, easy go go go," Bertie said.

The driver started to thank him.

"Go." He closed the door.

He spread Norma Feldman's largest tablecloth over the dining room table and then he took some china and some sterling from the big breakfront and laid several place settings. He found champagne glasses.

Unwrapping the pizza, he carefully plucked all the mushrooms from it ("American mushrooms," he said. "Very square. No visions.") and laid them in a neat pile on the white linen. ("Many mushloom," he said. "Mushloom crowd.") He poured some beer into a champagne glass.

He rose slowly from his chair.

"Gentlemen," he said, "to the absent Klaff. May the police in Los Angeles, California beat his lousy ass off." He drank all the beer in one gulp and tossed the glass behind him over his shoulder. He heard the glass shatter and then a soft sizzling sound. He turned around and saw that he had gotten

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one of Norma's paintings right in a picturesque side street. Beer dripped ignobly down a donkey's leg. "Goddamn," Bertie said appreciatively, "*action* painting."

He ate perhaps a quarter of the pizza and got up from the table, wiping the corner of his lips with a big linen napkin.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I propose that the ladies retire to the bedroom while we men enjoy our cigars and port and some good talk."

"I propose that we men retire to the bedroom and enjoy the ladies," he said in Gimpel's voice.

"Here, here," he said in Klaff's voice. "Here, here. Good talk. Good talk."

"If you will follow me, gentlemen," he said in his own voice. He began to walk around the apartment. "I have been often asked the story of my life. These requests usually follow a personal favor someone has done me, a supper shared, a bed made available, a ride in one of the several directions. Indeed, I have become a sort of troubadour who does not sing so much as whine for his supper. Most of you—"

"Whine is very good with supper," Gimpel said.

"Gimpel, my dear, why don't you run into the kitchen and play?" Bertie said coolly. "Many of you may know the humble beginnings, the sordid details, the dark Freudian patterns, and those of you who are my friends—"

Klaff belched.

"Those of you who are my *friends*, who do not run off to mix it up with the criminal element in the Far West, have often wondered what will ultimately happen to me, to 'Poor Bertie' as I am known in the trade."

Bertie unbuttoned his shirt and let it fall to the floor. He looked defenceless in his undershirt, his skin pale as something seen in moonlight.

"Why, you wonder, doesn't he do something about himself, pull himself up by his bootstraps? Why, for example, doesn't he get his eyes fixed? Well, I've tried."

He kicked off his shoes.

"You have all admired my bushy moustache. Do you remember that time two years ago I dropped out of sight for

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four months? Well let me tell you what happened that time."

He took off his black pants.

"I had been staying with Royal Randle, the distinguished philologist and drunk. You will recall that Royal with Klaff and Myers and Gimpel and myself once constituted a quintet known familiarly as 'The Irresponsibles.'" Bertie sighed. "You remember the promises: 'It won't make any difference, Bertie. It won't make any difference, Klaff. It won't make any difference, fellas.' He married the girl in the Muu Muu."

He was naked now except for his socks. He shivered once and folded his arms across his chest.

"Do you know why the girl in the Muu Muu married Randle?" He paused dramatically. "*To get at me, that's why.* The others she didn't care about. She knew even before I did what they were like. Even what Klaff was like. She knew they were corrupt, that they had it in them to sell me out, to settle down—that all anyone had to do was wave their deaths in front of them and they'd come running, that reason and fucking money and getting it steady would win again. But in me she recognized the real enemy, the last of the go-to-hell-god-damn-its. Maybe the first.

"They even took me with them on their honeymoon. At the time I thought it was a triumph for dependency, but it was just a trick, that's all *that* was. The minute they were married this girl in the Muu Muu was after Randle to do something about Bertie. And it wasn't 'Poor' Bertie this time. It was she who got me the appointment with the Mayor. Do you know what His Honor said to me? 'Shave your moustache and I'll give you a job clerking in one of my supermarkets.' Christ, friends, do you know I *did* it? Well, I'm not made of stone. They had taken me on their honeymoon for God's sake."

Bertie paused.

"I worked in that super-market *for three hours.* Clean shaved. My moustache sacrificed as an earnest to the Mayor. Well I'm telling you you don't know what square *is* till you've worked in a supermarket for three hours. They pipe in Mantovani. *Mantovani!* I cleared out for four months to raise my bushy moustache again and to forget. What you see now

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isn't the original, you understand. It's all second growth, and believe me it's not the same."

Bertie drew aside the shower curtain and stepped into the tub. He paused with his hand on "Hot".

"But I tell you this, friends, I tell you this. That I would rather be a moustached bum than a clean-shaved clerk. I'll work. Sure I will. When they pay anarchists. When they subsidize the hip. When they give grants to throw bombs. When they shell out for gainsaying."

He pulled the curtain and turned on the faucet and the rush of water was like applause.

After his shower Bertie went into the second bedroom and carefully removed the spread from the cot. Then he punched the pillow and mussed the bed. "Very clever," he said. "It wouldn't do to let them think I *never* slept here." He had once realized with sudden clarity that he would never, so long as he lived, make a bed.

He went then into the other bedroom and ripped the spread from the big double bed. For some time, in fact since he had first seen it, Bertie had been thinking about this bed. It was the biggest bed he would ever sleep in. (He thought invariably in such terms. One cigarette in a pack would suddenly become distinguished in his mind as the best, or the worst, he would smoke that day. A homely act, such as tying his shoelaces, if it had occurred with unusual ease, would be remembered forever. This lent to his vision an oblique sadness, conscious as he was that he was forever encountering experiences which would never come his way again.)

He slipped his naked body between the sheets and had no sooner made himself comfortable than he became conscious of the phonograph, still playing in the little hall. He couldn't hear it very well. He thought about turning up the volume but he had read somewhere about neighbors. He got out of bed and went to the phonograph. He moved the heavy machine through the living room, pushing it with difficulty over the seamed, bare wooden floor, trailing deep scratches. "Remember not to walk barefoot over there," he thought.

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At one point one of the legs caught in a loop of the Feldmans' shag rug and Bertie strained to free it, finally breaking the thick thread and producing an interesting pucker along one end of the rug, not unlike the pucker in raised theatrical curtains. At last he maneuvered the machine into the hall just outside the bedroom. He plugged it in. He went back for the Billie Holliday recording he had heard earlier and put it on the phonograph. By lifting the arm that held and steadied the records on the spindle and pulling it back, he fixed it so the record would play all night.

He got back into the bed.

"Ah," he said, "the *sanctum sanctorum*." He rolled over and over from one side of the bed to the other. He tucked his knees into his chest and went under the covers. "It makes you feel kind of small and insignificant," he said.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, this is Graham Macnamee speaking to you from the Cave of the Winds. I have made my way into the heart of this darkness to find my friend, Poor Bertie, who, as you know, entered the bed eight weeks ago. Bertie is with me now, and while there isn't enough light for me to be able to see his condition, his voice may tell us something about his physical state. Bertie, just what *is* the official record?"

"Well, Graham, some couples have been known to stick it out for seventy-five years. Of course your average is much less than that, but still—"

"Seventy-five years."

"Seventy-five, yes sir. It's amazing, isn't it, Graham, when you come to think? All that time in one bed."

"It certainly is," Graham Macnamee said. "Do you think you'll be able to go the distance, Bert?"

"Who, me? No, no. A lot of folks have misunderstood my purpose in coming here. I'm rather glad you've given me the opportunity to clear that up. Actually my work here is scientific. This isn't a stunt or anything like that. I'm here to learn."

"Can you tell us about it, Bert?"

"Graham, it's been a fascinating experience if you know what I mean, but frankly there are many things we still don't

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understand. *I* don't know why they do it. All that licit love, that regularity. Take the case of Stephen and Norma, for example. And incidentally, you don't want to overlook the significance of that name 'Norma.' Norma/Normal, you see?"

"Say, I never thought of that."

"Well, I'm trained to think like that, Graham. In my work you have to."

"Say," Graham Macnamee said.

"Sure. Well the thing is this, buddy, when I first came into this bed I felt the aura, know what I mean, the *power*. I think it's built into the mattress or something."

"Say."

"Shut your face, Graham, and let me speak, will you please? Well, anyway, you feel surrounded. Respectable. Love is made here, of course, but it's not love as we know it. There are things that must remain mysteries until we have more facts. I mean Graham, checks could be cashed in this bed, for Christ's sake, credit cards honored. It's ideal for family reunions and high teas. Graham, it's the kind of place you wouldn't be ashamed to take your mother."

"Go to sleep, Bert," Graham Macnamee said.

"Say," Bertie said.

Between the third and fourth day of his stay in the Feldmans' apartment Bertie became restless. He had not been outside the house since the Sunday he had come, even to bring in the papers Feldman had told him about. (Indeed, it was by counting the papers that he knew how long he had been there, though he couldn't be sure since he didn't know whether the Feldmans had taken the Sunday paper with them.) He could see them on the back porch through the window of Norma's sun parlor. With the bottles of milk they made a strange little pile. He was not after all a caretaker. He was a guest. Feldman could bring in his own papers, drink his own damn milk. For the same reasons he had determined not even to answer the phone when it rang.

One evening he tried to call Klaff at the Los Angeles County Jail, but the desk sergeant wouldn't get him. He wouldn't

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even take a message.

Although he had not been outside since Sunday, Bertie had only a vague desire to go out. He weighed this against his real need to rest and his genuine pleasure in being alone in so big an apartment. Like the man in the joke who does not leave his Miami hotel room because it is costing him thirty-five dollars a day, Bertie decided he had better remain inside.

With no money left he was reduced to eating the dry, cold remainder of the pizza, dividing it mathematically into a week's provisions like someone on a raft. (Bertie actually fancied himself, not on a raft perhaps, but set alone and drifting in, say, the *Queen Mary*.) To supplement this he opened some cans of soup he found in the pantry and drank the contents straight, without first heating it or even adding water.

Steadily he drank away at the Feldmans' not really large stock of liquor. The twelve cans of beer, of course, had been devoured by the second morning.

After the second full day in the apartment his voices began to desert him. It was only with difficulty that he could manage his imitations, and only for short lengths of time. The glorious discussions that had gone on long into the night were now out of the question. He found he could not do Gimpel's voice any more and even Klaff's was increasingly difficult and largely confined to his low, caressing obscenities. Mostly he talked with himself, although it was a real strain to keep up his end of the conversation and it always made him cry when he said how pathetic he was and asked himself where do you go from here. "Oh to be like Bird," he thought. "Not to have to be a bum. To ask, as it were, no quarter."

At various times during the day he would call out, "Bird lives," in seeming stunning triumph. But he didn't believe it.

He watched a lot of television. ("I'm getting ammunition," he said. "It's scientific.")

And twice a day he masturbated in the Feldmans' bed.

He settled gradually, then, into restlessness. He knew, of course, that he had it always in his power to bring himself back up to the heights he had known in those wonderful first two days. He was satisfied, however, not to use this pow-

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er, and thought of himself as a kind of soldier, alone, in a foxhole, in enemy territory, at night, at a bad time in the war, with one bullet in his pistol. Oddly he derived more pride (and comfort, and a queer security) from this single bullet than others might from whole cases of ammunition. It was his *strategic* bullet, the one he would use to get the big one, turn the tide, make the difference. The Feldmans would be away two weeks. He would not waste his ammunition. Just as he divided the stale pizza, cherishing each piece as much for the satisfaction he took from possessing it during a time of emergency as for any sustenance it offered, so he enjoyed his knowledge that at any time he could recoup his vanishing spirits. He shared with the squares ("Use their own weapons to beat them, Bertie.") a special pride in adversity, in having to do without, in having to expose whatever was left of his character to the narrower straits. It was strange, Bertie thought seriously, it was the paradox of the world and an institutional insight that might have come right out of the mouth of that slut in Dallas, but the most peculiar aspect of the squares wasn't their lack of imagination or their bland bad taste, but their ability, like the wildest fanatics, like the furthest out of the furthest out, to cling to the illogical, finally untenable notion that they must *have* and *have* in order to live, at the same time that they realized that it was better not to have. What seemed so grand to Bertie, who admired all impossible positions, was that they believed both things with equal intensity, never suspecting for a moment any inconsistency. And here was Bertie, Bertie thought, here was Bertie, inside their capitol, on the slopes of their mountains, on their smooth shores, who believed neither of these propositions, who believed in not having and in not suffering too, who yet realized the very same pleasure they would in having and not using.

It was the strangest thing that would ever happen to him, he thought.

"Are you listening, Klaff, you second-story fink?" Bertie yelled. "Do you see how your old pal is developing what is called character?"

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And so, master of himself for once, he resolved (feeling what someone taking a vow feels) not to use the last of his drugs until the strategic moment of strategic truth.

That was Wednesday evening. By Thursday morning he had decided to break his resolution. He had not yielded to temptation, had not lain fitfully awake all night (indeed, his resolution had given him the serenity to sleep well) in the sweaty throes of withdrawal. There had been no argument or rationalization, nor had he decided that he had reached his limit or that this was the strategic moment he had been waiting for. He yielded as he always yielded, spontaneously, suddenly, unexpectedly, as the result neither of whim nor calculation. His important decisions were almost always reached without his knowledge and Bertie was often as surprised as the next one to see what he was going to do, to see, indeed, that he was already doing it. (Once someone had asked him whether he believed in Free Will and Bertie, after considering this for a moment as it applied to himself, had answered, "Free? Hell, it's positively *loose*.")

Having discovered his new intention Bertie was eager to realize it. As often as he had taken drugs (he never called it anything but drugs, never used the cute or obscene names, never even said "dope;" to him it was always "drugs," medicine for his spirit), they were still a major treat for him. ("It's a rich man's game," he had once told Klaff, and then he had leaned back philosophically. "You know, Klaff, it's a good thing I'm poor. When I think of the snobbish ennui of your wealthy junkies, I realize that they don't know how to appreciate their blessings. God keep me humble, Klaff. Abstinence makes the heart grow fonder, a truer word was never spoken.") Nor did a drug ever lose its potency for him. If he graduated from one to another it was not in order to recover some fading jolt, but to experience a new and different one. He held in contempt all those who professed disenchantment with the drugs they had been raised on and frequently went back to rediscover the old pleasures of marijuana, as a sentimental father might chew some of his boy's bubble gum. "Loyalty, Gimpel," he exclaimed, "loyalty, do you know

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what *that* is?"

He would and did try anything, though currently his favorite was mescaline for the visions it induced. Despite what he considered his eclectic tastes in these things, however, there were one or two things he would not do. He never introduced any drug by hypodermic needle. This he found disgusting and, frankly, painful. (He often said he could stand anything but pain and was very proud of his clear, unpunctured skin. "Not a mark on me," he would say, waving his arms like a professional boxer.) The other thing he would not do was take his drugs in the presence of other users for he found the company of addicts offensive. He was not above what he called "seductions," however. A seduction for him was to find some girl and talk her into letting him share his drugs with her. Usually it ended in their lying naked in a bed together, both of them serene, absent of all desire and what Bertie called "unclean thoughts."

"You know," he would say to the girl beside him, "I think that if all the world's leaders would take drugs and lie down on the bed naked like this without any unclean thoughts, that the cause of world peace would be helped immeasurably. What do you think?"

"I think so too," she would say.

Once he knew he was going to take the drug Bertie made his preparations. He went first to his trumpetcase and took out the last small packet of powder. He opened it carefully, first closing all the windows so that no sudden draft could blow any of it away. This had once happened to a friend of his and Bertie had never forgotten the warning.

"I am not one on whom a lesson is lost," Bertie said.

"You're o.k., Bertie," a Voice said. "Go, save France."

He laid it on the Feldmans' coffee table and carefully spread the paper, exactly like the paper wrapper around a stick of chewing gum, looking almost lustfully at the soft, flat layer of ground white powder. He held out his hand to see how steady it was and although he was not really shaky he did not trust himself to lift the paper from the table. He brought a water tumbler from the Feldmans' kitchen and gently placed it up-

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side down on top of the powder. He was not yet ready to take it. Bertie was a man who postponed his pleasures as long as he possibly could. He let candy dissolve in his mouth and played with the threads on his tangerine before eating the fruit. It was a weakness in his character perhaps, but he laid it lovingly at the feet of his poverty.

He decided to wait until sundown to take the drug, reasoning that when it wore off it would be early next morning and he would be ready for bed. Sleep was one of his pleasures, too, and he approved of regularity in small things, taking a real pride in being able to keep hours. To pass the time until sundown he looked for something to do. He found some tools and busied himself by taking Norma's steam iron apart. There was still time left and he took a canvas and painted a picture. Because he did not know how to draw he simply covered the canvas first with one color and then with another, applying layer after layer of the paint thickly. Each block of color he made somewhat smaller than the last so that the finished painting portrayed successive jagged margins of color. He stepped back and considered his work seriously.

"Well it has texture, Bertie," Hans Hofmann said.

"Bertie," the Voice said suddenly, "I don't like to interrupt when you're working, but it's sundown."

"So it is," he said, looking up.

He went back into the living room and removed the tumbler. Taking up the paper in his fingers and creasing it as if he were a cowboy rolling a cigarette, Bertie tilted his head far back and inhaled the powder deeply. This part was always uncomfortable for him.

"Ooo," he said, "the bubbles." He stuffed the last few grains up his nose with his fingers. "Waste not, want not," he said.

Bertie sat down to wait. After half an hour in which nothing happened he became uneasy. "It's been cut," he said. "Sure, depend upon friends to do you favors." He was referring to the fact that the drug had been a going-away present from friends in Oklahoma City. He decided to give

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it fifteen more minutes. "Nothing," he said at last, disappointed. "Nothing."

The powder, as it always did, left his throat scratchy, and there was a bitter taste in his mouth. His soft palate prickled. He seized the water tumbler from the coffee table and walked angrily into the kitchen. He ran the cold water. He gargled and spit in the sink. In a few minutes the bitter taste and the prickly sensation had subsided and he felt about as he had before he had taken the drug. He was conscious however of a peculiar smell, unpleasant, unfamiliar, nothing like the odor of rotting flowers he associated with the use of drugs. He opened a window and leaning out, breathed the fresh air. As soon as he came away from the window, however, the odor was overpowering. He went to see if he could smell it in the other rooms. When he had made his tour he realized that the stench *must* be coming from the kitchen. Holding his breath he came back to see if he could locate its source. The kitchen was almost as Norma had left it. Bertie, of course, had done no cooking and although there were some empty soup and beer cans in the sink he knew *they* couldn't be causing the odor. He shrugged. Then he noticed the partially closed door to Stephen's study.

"Of course," he said. "Whatever it is must be in there." He pushed the door open. In the middle of the floor were two blackish mounds that looked like dark sawdust. Bertie stepped back in surprise.

"Camel shit," he said. "My God, how did *that* get in here?" He went closer to investigate. "That's what it is all right." He had never seen it before but a friend had and had described it to him. This stuff fitted the description perfectly. He considered what to do.

"I can't leave it there," he said. He found a dustpan and a broom and propping the pan against the leg of Stephen's chair he began to sweep the stuff up. He was surprised at how remarkably gummy it seemed. When he finished he washed the spot on the floor with a foaming detergent and stepped gingerly to the back door. He lifted the lid of the garbage can and shoved the broom and the contents of the dustpan

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and the dustpan itself into the can.

He went into the bathroom and washed his hands.

In the living room he saw the Chinaman.

"Jesus," Bertie said breathlessly.

The Chinaman lowered his eyes in a shy, almost demure smile. He said nothing, but motioned Bertie to sit in the chair across from him. Bertie, too frightened to disobey, sat down.

He waited for the Chinaman to tell him what he wanted. When after an hour (Bertie heard the chime clock strike nine times and then ten times) the Chinaman still had not said anything, he began to feel a little calmer. "Maybe he was just tired," Bertie thought, "and came in to rest." He realized that perhaps he and the Chinaman had more in common than had at first appeared. He looked at the fellow in this new light and saw that he had been foolish to fear him. The Chinaman was small, smaller even than Bertie. In fact he was only two feet tall. Perhaps what made him seem larger was the fact that he was wrapped in wide, voluminous white silk robes. Bertie stared at the robes, fascinated by the delicate filigree trim up and down their length. To see this closer he stood up and walked tentatively toward the Chinaman. The Chinaman gazed steadily frontwards and Bertie, seeing no threat, continued toward him.

He leaned down over the Chinaman and grasping the delicate lacework between forefinger and thumb gently drew it toward his eye. "May I!?" Bertie said. "I know a good deal about this sort of thing."

The Chinaman lowered his eyes.

Bertie examined the weird symbols and designs and, although he did not understand them, recognized at once their cabalistic origin.

"Magnificent," Bertie said at last. "My God, the man-hours that must have gone into this. *The sheer craftsmanship*! That's really a terrific robe you've got there."

The Chinaman lowered his eyes still further.

Bertie sat down in his chair again. He heard the clock strike eleven and he smiled at the Chinaman. He was trying to be sympathetic, patient. He knew the fellow had his reasons

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for coming and that in due time they would be revealed, but he couldn't help being a little annoyed. First the failure of the drug and then the camel shit on the floor and now this. However, he remained very polite.

There was nothing else to do so Bertie concentrated on the Chinaman's face.

Then a strange thing happened.

He became aware, as he scrutinized the face, of some things he hadn't noticed before. First he realized that it was the oldest face he had ever seen. He knew that this face was old enough to have looked on Buddha's. It was only *faintly* yellow, really, and he understood with a sweeping insight that originally it must have been white, as it was largely still, a striking, flat white, naked as a sheet, bright as teeth, that its yellowness was the yellowness of fantastic age, of pages in ancient books. As soon as he perceived this he understood the origin and mystery of the races. All men had at first been white; their different tints were only the shades of their different wisdoms. "Of course," he thought. "Of course. It's beautiful. Beautiful."

The second thing he noticed was that the face seemed extraordinarily wise. The longer he stared at it the wiser it seemed. Clearly this was the wisest Chinaman, and thus the wisest man, in the history of the world. Now he was impatient for the Chinaman to speak, to tell him his secrets, but Bertie also understood that so long as he was impatient the Chinaman would *not* speak, that he must become serene, as serene as the Chinaman himself, or the Chinaman would go away. As this occurred to him the Chinaman smiled and Bertie knew he had been right.

Bertie was aware that if he just sat there, deliberately trying to become serene, nothing would happen. He decided that the best way to become serene was to ignore the Chinaman, to go on about his business as if the Chinaman weren't even there.

He stood up. "Am I getting warm?" Bertie asked.

The Chinaman lowered his eyes and smiled.

"Well, then," Bertie said, rubbing his hands, "let's see."

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He went into the kitchen to see if there was anything he could do there to make him serene.

He washed out the empty cans of soup.

He strolled into the bedroom and made the bed. This took him an hour. (He heard the clock strike twelve and then one.)

He took a record off the machine and, starting from the center hole and working to the outer edge, counted all the ridges. (This took him fourteen seconds and he was pleased at how quickly and efficiently he worked.)

He found a suitcase in one of the closets and packed all of Norma's underwear into it.

He got a pail of water and some soap and washed all the walls in the small bedroom.

It was in the dining room, however, that he finally achieved serenity. He studied Norma's pictures of side streets throughout the world and with sudden insight understood what was wrong with them. He took some tubes of white paint and with a brush worked over the figures, painting back into the flesh all their original whiteness. He made the Mexicans white, the Negroes, feeling as he worked an immense satisfaction, the satisfaction not of the creator, nor even of the reformer, but of the restorer.

Swelling with serenity he went back into the living room and sat down in his chair.

For the first time the Chinaman met Bertie's gaze directly, and Bertie realized that something important was going to happen.

The Chinaman slowly, very slowly, began to open his mouth. Bertie watched the slow parting of the Chinaman's thin lips, the gleaming teeth, white and bright as fence pickets. Gradually the rest of the room darkened and the thinly padded chair on which Bertie sat grew incredibly soft. Bertie knew they had been transported somehow, that they were now in a sort of theater. The Chinaman was seated on a kind of raised platform. Meanwhile the mouth continued to open, slowly as an ancient drawbridge. Tiny as the Chinaman was the mouth seemed enormous. Bertie gazed into it, seeing nothing. At last, deep back in the mouth, Bertie saw a brief

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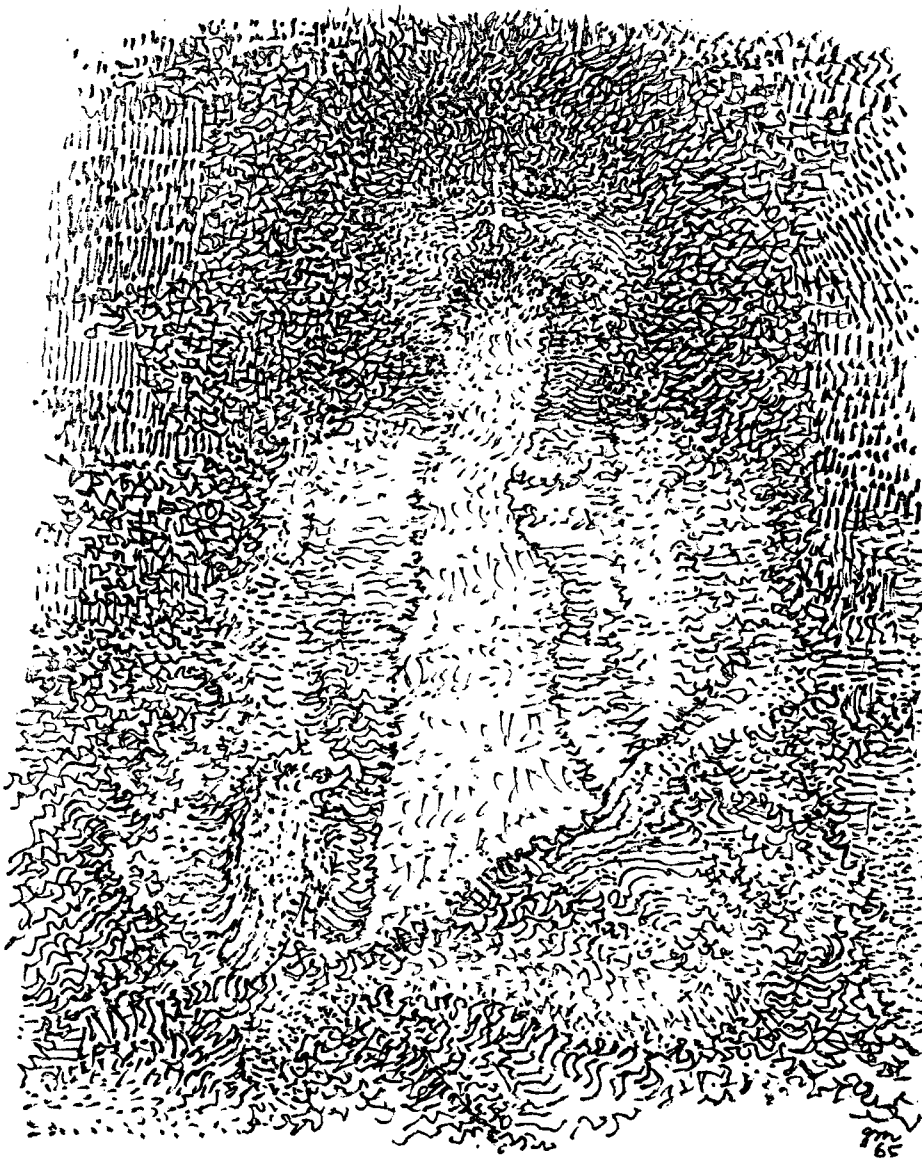

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flashing, as of a small crystal on a dark rock suddenly illuminated by the sun. In a moment he saw it again, brighter now, longer sustained. Soon it was so bright that Bertie had to force himself to look at it. Then the mouth went black. Before he could protest the brightness was overwhelming again and he saw a cascade of what seemed like diamonds tumble out of the Chinaman's mouth. It was the Chinaman's tongue.

The tongue, twisting, turning over and over like magicians' silks pulled endlessly from a tube, continued to pour from the Chinaman's mouth.

Bertie saw that it had the same whiteness as the rest of his face and was studded with bright, beautiful jewels. On the tongue, long now as an unfurled scroll, were black, thick Chinese characters. It was the secret of life, the world, the universe. Bertie could barely see for the tears of gratitude in his eyes. Desperately he wiped the tears away with his fists. He looked back at the tongue and stared at the strange words, realizing that he could not read Chinese. He was sobbing helplessly now but he knew there was not much time. The presence of the Chinaman gave him courage and strength and he *forced* himself to read the Chinese. As he concentrated it became easier, the characters somehow re-forming, translating themselves into a sort of decipherable Chinesey script, like the words "Chop Suey" on the neon sign outside a Chinese restaurant. Bertie was breathless from his effort and the stunning glory of what was being revealed to him. Frequently he had to pause, punctuating his experience with queer little squeals.

"Oh," he said. "Oh. Oh."

Then it was over.

He was exhausted but his knowledge glowed in him like fire. "So *that's* it," was all he could say. "So *that's* it. So *that's* it."

Bertie saw that he was no longer in the theater. The Chinaman was gone and Bertie was back in the Feldmans' living room. He struggled for control of himself. He knew it was urgent that he tell someone what had happened to him. Desperately he pulled open his trumpetcase. Inside he had pasted

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sheets with the names, addresses and phone numbers of all his friends.

"Damn Klaff," he said angrily. "Damn second-story Klaff in his lousy jail."

He spotted Gimpel's name and the phone number of his boarding house in Cincinnati. He tore the sheet from where it was pasted inside the lid and rushed to the phone. He placed the call. "Life and death," he screamed at Gimpel's bewildered landlady, "life and death."

When Gimpel came to the phone Bertie began to tell him, coherently, but with obvious excitement, all that had happened. Gimpel was as excited as himself.

"Then the Chinaman opened his mouth and this tongue with writing on it came out."

"Yeah!" Gimpel said. "Yeah? Yeah?"

"Only it was in Chinese," Bertie shouted.

"Chinese," Gimpel said.

"But I could read it, Gimpel! *I could read it*!"

"I didn't know you could read Chinese," Gimpel said.

"It was the meaning of life."

"Yeah?" Gimpel said. "Yeah? What'd it say? What'd it say?"

"What?" Bertie said.

"What'd it say? What'd the Chink's tongue say was the meaning of life?"

"I forget," Bertie said and hung up.

He slept until two the next afternoon and when he awoke he felt as if he had been beaten up. His tongue was something that did not quite fit in his mouth, and throughout his body he experienced a looseness of the bones, as though his skeleton were a mobile put together by an amateur. He groaned dispiritedly, his eyes still closed. He knew he had to get up out of the bed and take a shower and shave and dress, that only by making extravagant demands on it would his body give him any service at all. "You *will* make the Death March," he warned it ruthlessly.

He opened his eyes and what he saw disgusted him and

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turned his stomach. His eye patch had come off during the night and now there were two of everything. He saw one eye patch on one pillow and another eye patch on another pillow. Hastily he grabbed for it but he had chosen the wrong pillow. He reached for the other eye patch and the other pillow but somehow he had put out one of his illusory hands. It did not occur to him to shut one eye. At last, by covering all visible space, real or illusory, with all visible fingers, real or illusory—like one dragging a river—he recovered the patch and pulled it quickly over one of his heads.

He stood stunned in his hot shower and then shaved, cutting his neck badly. He dressed. "Whan 'e iz through his toilette, *Monsieur* will see how much better 'e feel," his valet said.

He doubted it and didn't answer.

In the dining room he tried not to look at Norma's paintings but could not help noticing that many of her sunny, side streets had, overnight, become partial snow scenes. He had done that, he remembered, though he could not recall now exactly why. It seemed to have something to do with a great anthropological discovery he had made the night before.

He finished the last of the pizza, gagging on it briefly.

Considering the anguish of his body it suddenly occurred to him that perhaps he was hooked. This momentarily appealed to his sense of the dramatic, but then he realized that it would be a terrible thing to have happen to him. He could not afford to be hooked and he knew with a sense of calm sadness that his character could no more sustain the responsibility of a steady drug habit than it could sustain the responsibility of any other kind of pattern.

"Oh what a miserable bastard I am," he said.

In near panic he considered leaving the Feldmans' apartment immediately but he knew that he was in no condition to travel.

"You wouldn't get to the corner," he said.

He felt massively sorry for himself. The more he considered it the more certain it appeared that he was hooked. It was terrible. Where would he get the money to buy the drugs?

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What would they do to his already depleted physical resources?

"Oh what a miserable bastard I am," he said again.

To steady himself he took a bottle of Scotch from the shelf in the pantry where Feldman kept it. Bertie did not like hard liquor. Though he drank a lot, it was beer he drank, or, when he could get them, the sweeter cordials. Scotch and bourbon had always seemed vaguely square to him. But he had already finished the few liqueurs that Feldman had, and now nothing was left but Scotch. He poured himself an enormous drink.

Sipping it calmed him (though his body still ached) and he considered what to do. If he *was* hooked the first thing was to tell his friends. Telling his friends his latest failure was something Bertie regarded as a sort of responsibility. Thus his rare letters to them usually brought Bertie's intimates—he laughed at the word—nothing but bad news. He would write that a mistress had given him up, and, with his talent for mimicry, set down her last long disappointed speech to him, in which she exposed in angry, honest language the hollowness of his character, his infinite weakness as a man, his vileness. When briefly he had turned to homosexuality to provide himself with funds, the first thing he did was write his friends about it. Or he wrote of being fired from bands when it was discovered how bad a trumpeter he really was. He spared neither himself nor his friends in his passionate self-denunciations.

Almost automatically, then, he went into Feldman's study and began to write to all the people he could think of. As he wrote he pulled heavily at the whiskey remaining in the bottle.

At first the letters were long, detailed accounts of symptoms and failures and dashed hopes, but as evening came on and he grew inarticulate he realized it was more important—and, indeed, added to the pathos of his situation—for him just to get the facts to them.

"Dear Klaff," he wrote at last, "I am hooked. I am at the bottom, Klaff. I don't know what to do." Or "Dear Randle, I'm hooked. Tell your wife. I honestly don't know where to turn."

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And "Dear Myers, how are your wife and kids? Poor Bertie is hooked. He is thinking of suicide."

That one day he would have to kill himself he had known for a long time. It would happen, and even in the way he had imagined. One day he would simply drink the bottle of carbon tetrachloride. But he had been in no hurry. Now it seemed like something he might have to do before he had meant to, and, oddly, what he resented most was the idea of having to change his plans.

He imagined what people would say.

"I let him down, Klaff," Randle said.

"Everybody let him down," Klaff said.

"Everybody let him down," Bertie said. "Everybody let him down."

Weeping, he took a last drink from Feldman's bottle and stumbled into the living room where he passed out on the couch.

That night Bertie was awakened by a flashlight shining in his eyes. Bertie threw one arm across his face defensively and struggled to sit up. So clumsy were his efforts that whoever was holding the flashlight started to laugh.

"Stop that," Bertie said indignantly, and thought, "I have never been so indignant in the face of danger."

"You said they were out of town," a voice said. The voice did not come from behind the flashlight and Bertie wondered how many there might be.

"Jesus, I thought so. Nobody's answered the phone for days. I never seen a guy so plastered. He stinks."

"Kill him," the first voice said.

Bertie stopped struggling to get up.

"Kill him," the voice repeated.

"What is this?" Bertie said thickly. "What is this?"

"Come on, he's so drunk he's harmless," the second voice said.

"Kill him," the first voice said again.

"You kill him," the second voice said.

The first voice giggled.

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They were playing with him, Bertie knew. Nobody who did not know him could want him dead.

"Turn on the lights," Bertie said.

"Screw that," the second voice said. "You just sit here in the dark, sonny, and you won't get hurt."

"We're wasting time," the first voice said.

A beam from a second flashlight suddenly intersected the beam from the first.

"Say," Bertie said nervously, "it looks like the opening of a super-market."

Bertie could hear them working in the dark, moving boxes, pulling drawers.

"Are you folks Negroes?" Bertie called. No one answered him. "I mean I dig Negroes, man—*men*. Miles. Jay Jay. Bird lives." Bertie heard a closet door open.

"You *are* robbing the place, right? I mean you're actually *stealing*, aren't you? This isn't just a social call. Maybe you know my friend Klaff?"

The men came back into the living room. From the sound of his footsteps Bertie knew one of them was carrying something heavy.

"I've got the T.V.," the first voice said.

"There are some valuable paintings in the dining room," Bertie said.

"Go see," the first voice said.

One of Norma's pictures suddenly popped out of the darkness as the man's light shone on it.

"Crap," the second voice said.

"You guys can't be all bad," Bertie said.

"Any furs?" It was a third voice and it startled Bertie. Someone flashed a light in Bertie's face. "Hey you," the voice repeated, "does your wife have any furs?"

"Wait a minute," Bertie said as though it were a fine point they must be made to understand, "you've got it wrong. This isn't *my* place. I'm just taking care of it while my friends are gone." The man laughed.

Now all three flashlights were playing over the apartment. Bertie hoped a beam might illuminate one of the intruders

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but this never happened. Then he realized he didn't want it to happen, that he was safe as long as he didn't see any of them. Suddenly a light caught one of the men behind the ear. "Watch that light. Watch that light," Bertie called out involuntarily.

"I found a trumpet," the second voice said.

"Hey, that's mine," Bertie said angrily. Without thinking he got up and grabbed for the trumpet. In the dark he was able to get his fingers around one of the pistons, but the man snatched it away from him easily. Another man pushed Bertie back down on the couch.

"Could you leave the carbon tetrachloride?" Bertie asked miserably.

In another ten minutes they were ready to go.

"Shouldn't we do something about the clown?" the third voice said.

"Nah," the second voice said.

They went out the front door.

Bertie sat in the darkness. "I'm drunk," he said after a while. "I'm hooked and drunk. It never happened. It's still the visions. The apartment is a vision. The darkness is. Everything."

In a few minutes he got up and wearily turned on the lights.

"Magicians," Bertie thought, seeing even in a first glance all they had taken. Lamps were gone, drapes. He walked through the apartment. The T.V. was gone. Suits were missing from the closets. Feldman's typewriter was gone. The champagne glasses. The silver. His trumpet was gone.

Bertie wept. He thought of phoning the police but then wondered what he could tell them. They had been in the apartment twenty minutes and he hadn't even gotten a look at their faces.

Then he shuddered, realizing the danger he had been in. "Thieves," he said. "Killers." But even as he said it he knew it was an exaggeration. He personally had never been in any danger. He had the fool's ancient protection, his old immunity against consequence.

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He wondered what he could say to the Feldmans. They would be furious. Then, as he thought about it, he realized that this, too, was an exaggeration. They would not be furious. Like the thieves they would make allowances for him, as people always made allowances for him. They would forgive him and possibly even try to give him something toward the loss of his trumpet.

Bertie began to grow angry. They had no right to patronize him like that. If he was a clown it was because he had chosen to be. It was a way of life. Why couldn't they respect it? He should have been hit over the head like other men. How dare they forgive him? For a moment it was impossible for him to distinguish between the thieves and the Feldmans.

Then he had his idea. As soon as he thought of it he knew it would work. He looked around the apartment to see what he could take. There was some costume jewelry the thieves had thrown on the bed. Bertie scooped it up and stuffed it into his pockets.

He looked at the apartment one more time and then got the hell out of there. "Bird lives," he sang to himself as he raced down the stairs. "He lives and lives."

It was wonderful. How they would marvel. He couldn't get away with it. Even the Far West wasn't far enough. How they hounded you if you took something from them! He would be back, no question, and they would send him to jail, but first there would be the confrontation, maybe even in the apartment itself, Bertie in handcuffs, and the Feldmans staring at him, not understanding and angry at last, and something in their eyes like fear.

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Gary Snyder: Two Poems

1. *Hop, Skip, & Jump*

for Jim and Annie Hatch

the curvd lines toe-drawn, round cornerd squares
bulge out doubles from its single pillar line, like,
Venus of the Stone Age.
she takes stone,
with a white quartz band for her lagger.
she
takes a brown-stained salt sticky cigarette
butt.
he takes a mussel shell. he takes a clamshell. she takes
a stick.
he is tiny, with a flying run & leap
shaggy blond—misses all the markers,
tumbles from one foot.
they are dousing
a girl in a bikini down the beach
first with cold seawater
then with wine.
double-leg single-leg stork stalk turn
on the end-square—hop, fork, hop, scoop the marker,
we have all trippt and fallen.
surf rough and full of kelp,
all the ages—
draw a line on another stretch of sand—
and—
everybody try
to do the hop, skip, and jump.

4. X. 1964 —Muir Beach

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2.

On our way to
Khajuraho
the bus stoppt, we ate
guavas
cheap.
a toilet
with a picture of a woman and a man,
two doors,
in the square
dusty village somewhere on the way.
a girl thirteen
gave pice in change
to an old woman bought some sweets;

the men of Bundelkhand
wear elf-tongued
flowery leather shoes.

she must have been low-caste.
the girl stood off
little coins
crosst from hand to hand

2: XI: 1964

August was foggy,
September dry.
October grew too hot.
Napa and Sonoma grasslands,
brushlands,
burned.

In November
then
We all set back the clock
and suddenly it rained.

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The first green shoots of grass.
you
like some slender
fresh young plant
turn cool and smooth across me
in the night.

touch, and taste, and interlace
deep in the ground.
new rain.
as we begin our life.

—GARY SNYDER

THE LOT

It'll never be built, that house,
what do you say. There he stands,
the old man,
with his breast of pencils. I tell you,
it will not be built.

His eagle eye took in your lot,
measured it. His arms waved,
planting whole towns,
the old man,
practically.

Those whacky jokes of his kept things
going, sort of. Now
take a look at him, measuring
with his grin the headlightless
hollow cars.

—CHRISTOPHER MIDDLETON

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I WANT

(after a poem by Jules Supervielle)

With you I want to say,
humble feet of antelopes,
what I cannot have in mind
without your small crutches;
with you I want to say,
velvet muzzle of tigercat,
bird-wings and your feathers,
and fishes' fins, what without you
would still be looking out
for some expression.

Nothing would be too much for me,
neither beak of lark nor bull's breath;
I need the whole pack of animal cards,
I need the ten of thrushes, the four of foxes;
and if I had to keep silence,
I'd keep it with the one strength
of all your silences: silence
with claws, silence with a snout,
silence with small hooves.

—CHRISTOPHER MIDDLETON

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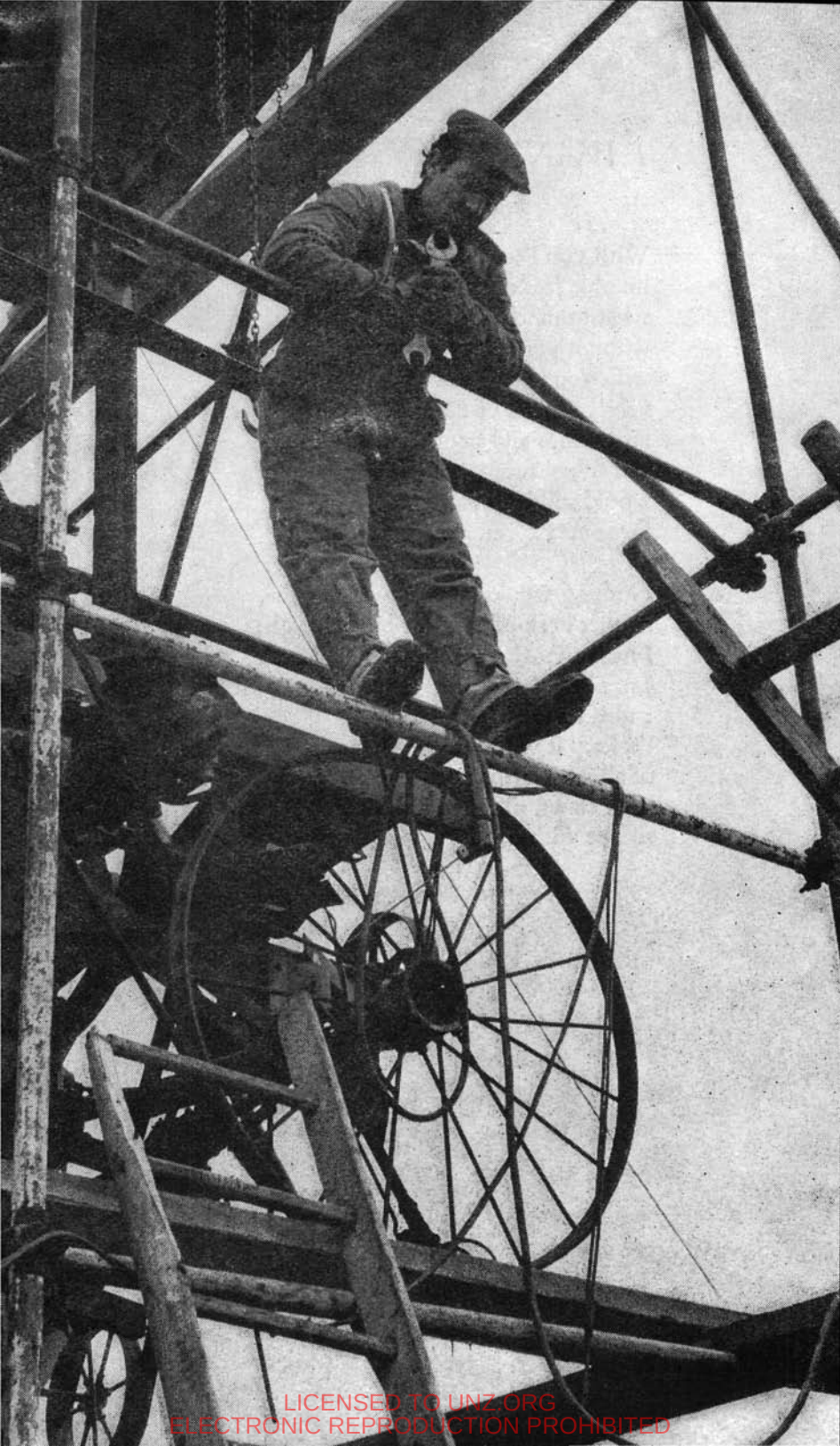
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THE DESIGNS FOR MOTION

of Jean Tinguely

A Portfolio and an Interview

Interviewer. If you were in my place, what questions would you ask?
Tinguely. Well, if I were you, I wouldn't want to be. I would find it hard to do; I would refuse to do it. But if I *had* to, I would ask first of all: why do things move in your work? It's the most simple, and also the most complicated, question. And I answer: things move because if they didn't move, they *might* move; that is, in trying to make static things I have tried what everyone tries, and I've found that one petrifies situations, the phenomena that one is trying to seize. And finally one finds that as you try to seize these things, the things tell you something. In our time, things race and revolve automatically; industry and automation dominate us and impose a rhythm on us. Faced with that kind of thing, my work must move to remain vital, to avoid obsolescence. That doesn't mean I'm afraid of being obsolescent: I agree with life and the idea of change; one knows everything is temporary and ephemeral. In making something move, however, one feels inside daily life; one doesn't admit it, but one knows very well that in moving machines one is faced with life against death. Movement is so natural and so forceful that it is a fundamental dynamism. And anyway, one wants machines to move...

I. They have the form of motion, and it's odd to see them not move.

T. They have the form of motion... a place left free for movement. There is something which is not made with the machine, which one can't see until it moves. When it is still, one knows it's going to move because something is missing. When it moves, one knows it's completed. Immobility in a machine must make the phenomenon of motion imminent.

I. In your most recent machines, it seems that there is less movement.

T. That's true, my latest machines are, I think, the most sculptural. In the machine for my last exposition (*Pages 84-85*), I found that when I had built it well, when it was what I wanted plastically, it didn't run as I had wanted it to. When it ran well, it didn't look like I had wanted it to. So I changed the rhythms, the speeds, to integrate these two

←Tinguely at Lausanne, working on "Eureka," 1964

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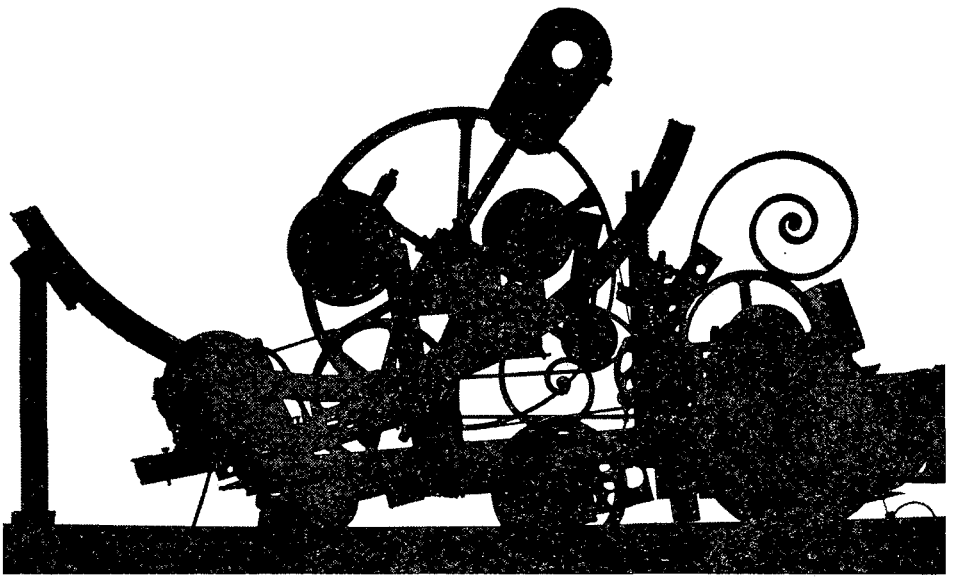

"MK III," 1964 (Photo by Horace Dimay

plastic phenomena: that is to say the mass of the machine and its less controllable phenomenon of movement, of coming and going. You see, this machine is shut inside itself; it's condemned to move in its own place. In working in its own place it evokes—for me—the myth of Sisyphus, the man who is condemned to push a stone up a mountain eternally, only to have it fall back to the bottom again. There is a new way to evoke this uselesnes of function, but this time, with a serious and mechanistic mode of expression.

I. It's a little like this tape recorder, or any machine, isn't it?

T. It's terrifying how we don't realize how the machine has come to dominate our age. We don't realize that your hair is treated by machine; that your stockings and your sweater and everything you're wearing were made by machines; and that the machines which do your hair and make your clothes were made by other machines. What happens at the base of our civilization is incredible. We go round in circles, there's no question about that. But insofar as it's dynamic, we advance. This domination by machine has produced an America that is a mad circus of automated, industrial machinery, such as we've not yet seen in Europe. Yet even here we've grown oblivious to the fact that in Paris there is such a mass of machinery in the street that one hardly moves. But it will get worse: you're going to see real madness! This kind of madness preoccupies me, and I think that with my machines

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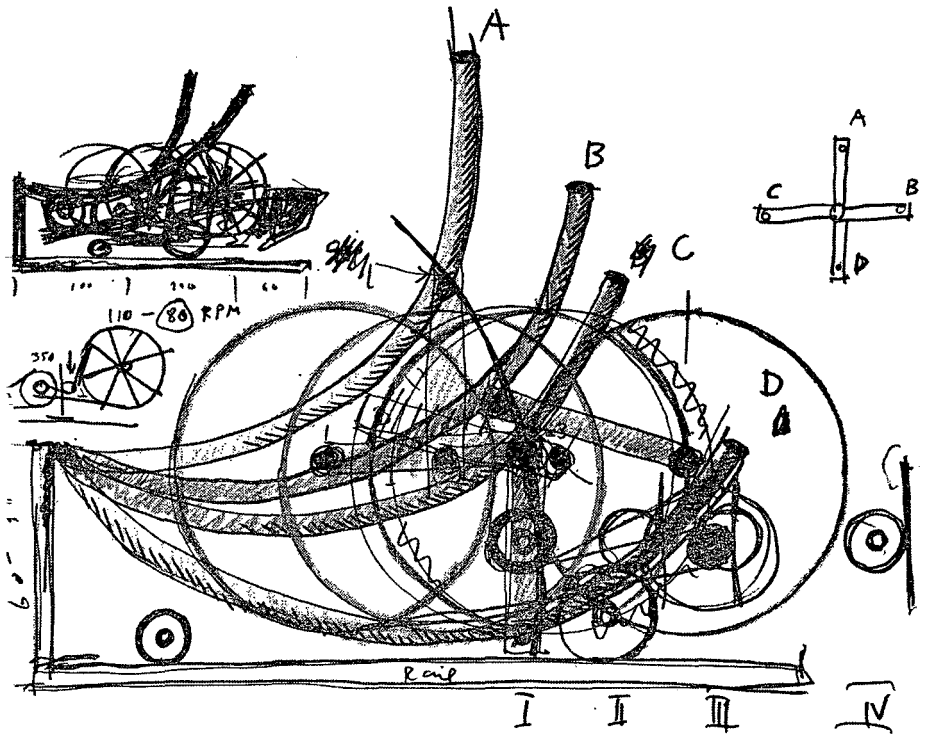

I point out the stupidity of the machine; the enormous uselessness of this gigantic effort.

I. Do you think that compared to you, other artists are doing things which are futile?

T. As far as those who conform to a movement which is already past are concerned—let us say the conformists to abstractionism—I think their assembly-line production is futile. And in making machines which draw (*Page 90*) I have been commenting ironically on this; I know what I've done has been terrible because of the great hostility which I've encountered on the part of those happy abstract painters, so calmly commercial. As for painting in general, I get great pleasure out of "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" or "Les Baigneuses". I am very aware of art in the sense that it gives me great pleasure when it is the fruit of a poetic effort.

I. Why don't you use color in your work?

T. I've tried. I like color but I've discovered that colors have their own movement, a kind of physical contraction with actual movement. I've made reliefs in color, but I find that color and my kind of motion don't go together. It's like motion pictures: they're always better in black and white. Color doesn't add anything to films; the harder the contrasts in a black-and-white film the better it is, the more movement it has. For my work, black is excellent, in that I find in it the means to

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unify, to make a polymorphic but unified space. In the body of a broken, sculptural object, black unites the work.

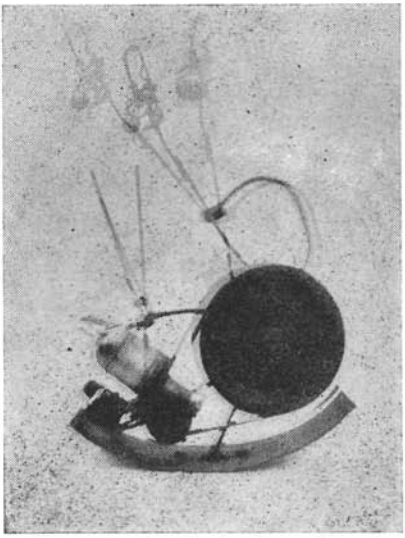
I. What about the noise your machines make?

T. It's not possible to make a silent engine. An engine inevitably produces noises; my machines aren't made to function without incident, but to have the noises manifest themselves in a powerful, musical, fashion. That sound is a part of a machine I realize, and I've tried to make it participate in the machine as much as the plasticity of the machine itself.

I. One last question: I want to ask you if there's anything you dislike in your work?

T. What I like, is the struggle to achieve something; what I dislike, the facility in achieving it. I don't like success very much. I find success too easy an achievement, it's annoying. What commercial success I've had has been slight; I haven't got the ability, as some do, to make a habit out of one thing. When something is going too quickly, I change. When something starts to sell, I abandon it. This makes it difficult for dealers and collectors, who get used to one phase of my work. It doesn't make things easier, but it lets me go farther personally. As I said at the beginning, the only stable thing is movement. Anything frozen into place is condemned, by that fact, to move.

—Laura Mathews



"Bascule", 1960 (photo by Horace Dimayo)

Facing page: "Moulin Méta-Mécanique", 1954

Pages 88-89: photograph and drawing, "Eureka," Lausanne Fair, 1964

Page 90: 'Méta-Matic # 9'

Page 91 Show at Iolas Gallery, Paris, 1964, "MK III" in left foreground "Méta-Matic # 9" in background.

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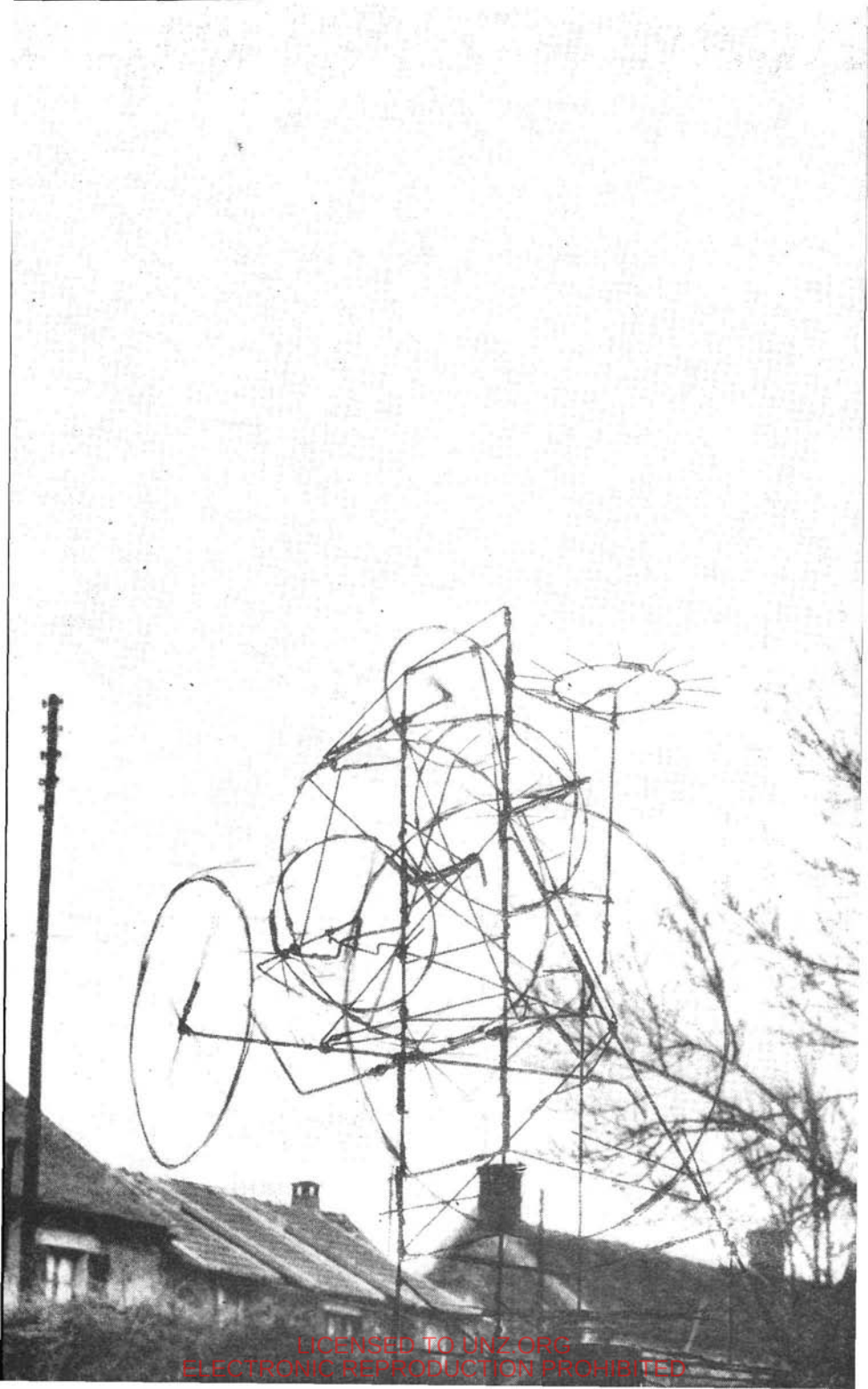
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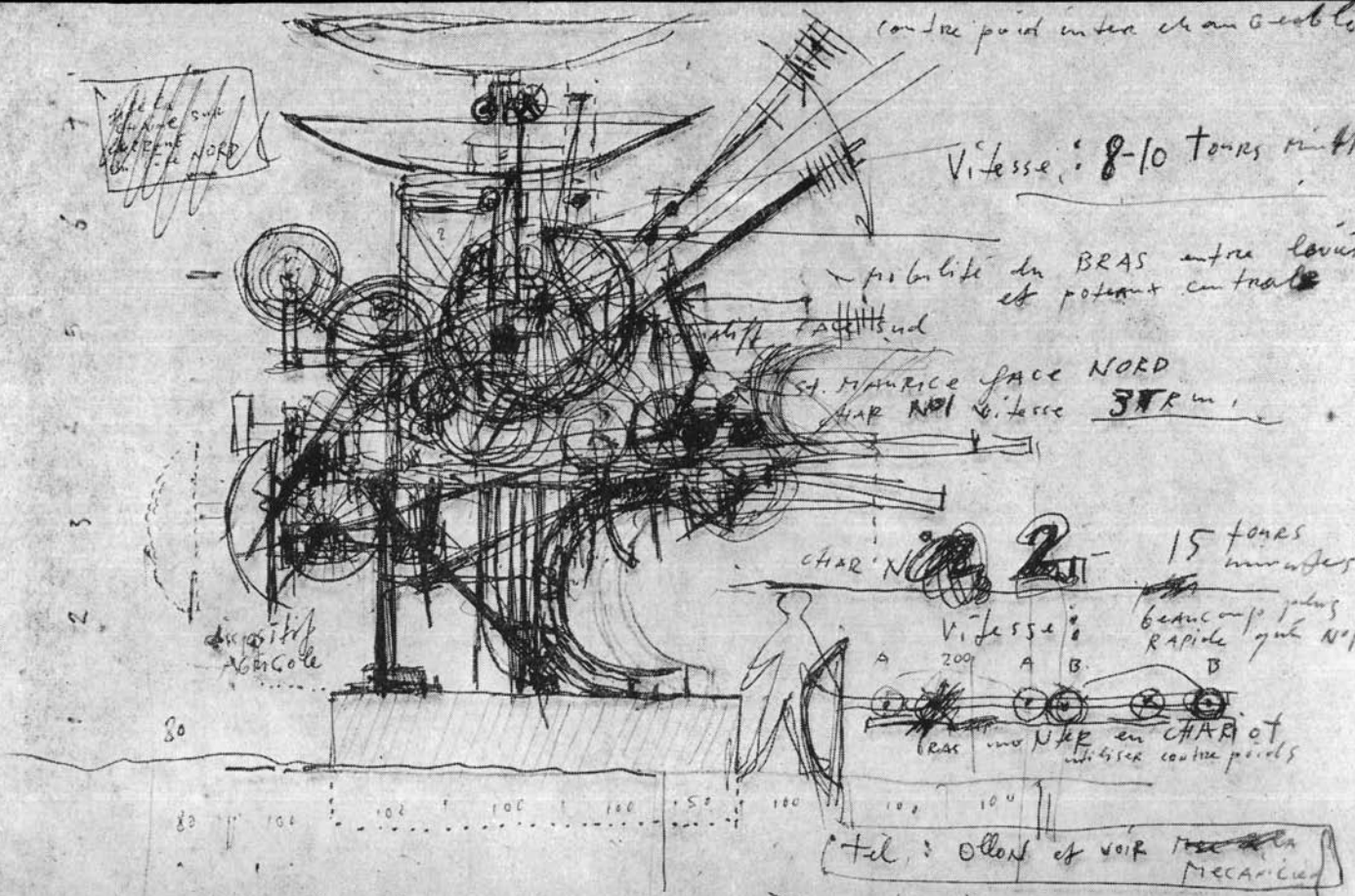
contre poid interchangeable
Vitesse : 8-10 tours minutes
probable BRAS entre levier et potence centrale
St. MAURICE face NORD
CHAR N°1 Vitesse 3 T.P.M.
CHAR N° 2
15 tours minutes
Vitesse :
beaucoup plus RAPIDE que N°1
A 200 A B B
RAS une N°1 en CHAR N°1 utiliser contre poids
Tel : OLLON et VOIR MECANICIEN

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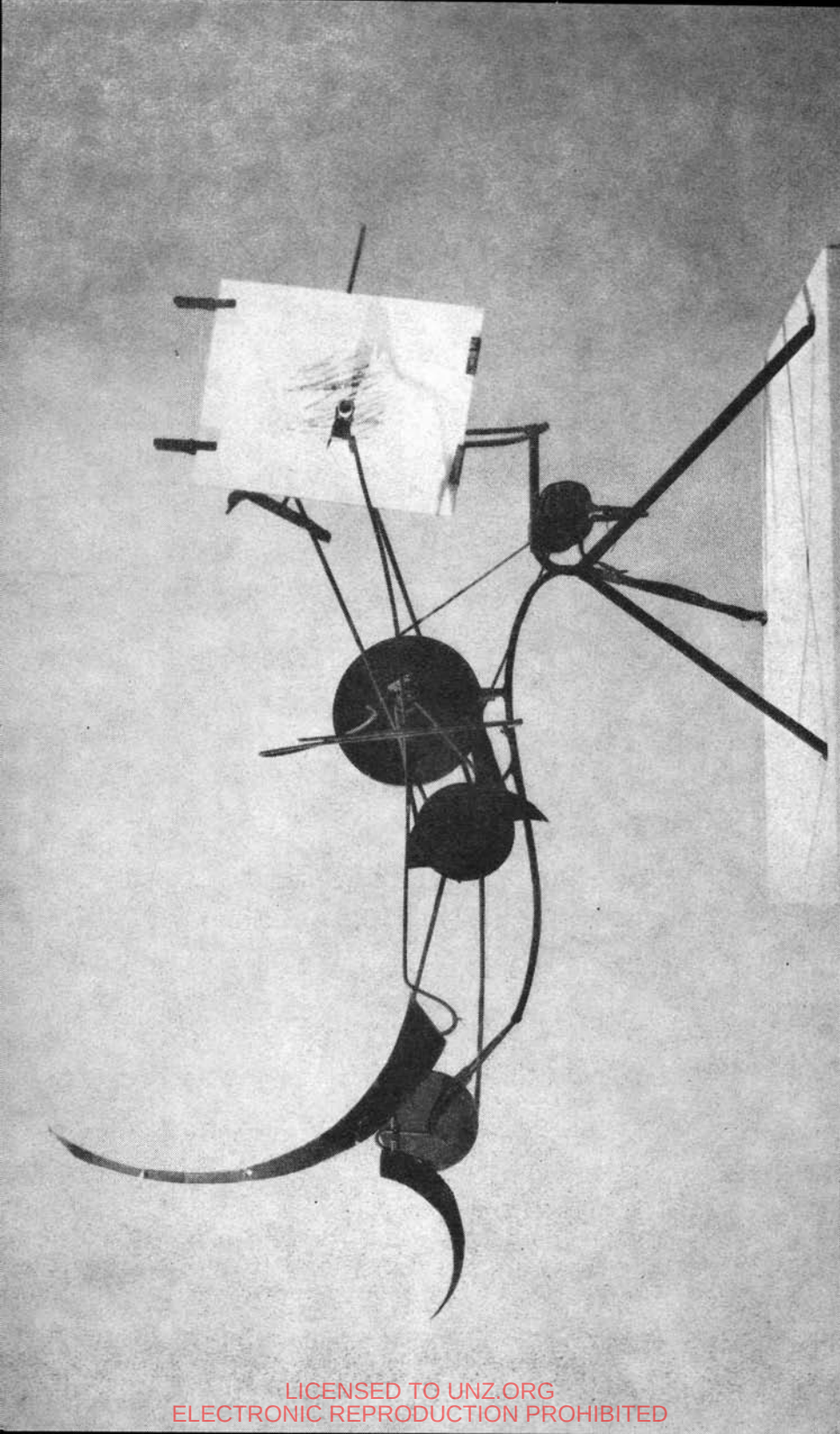

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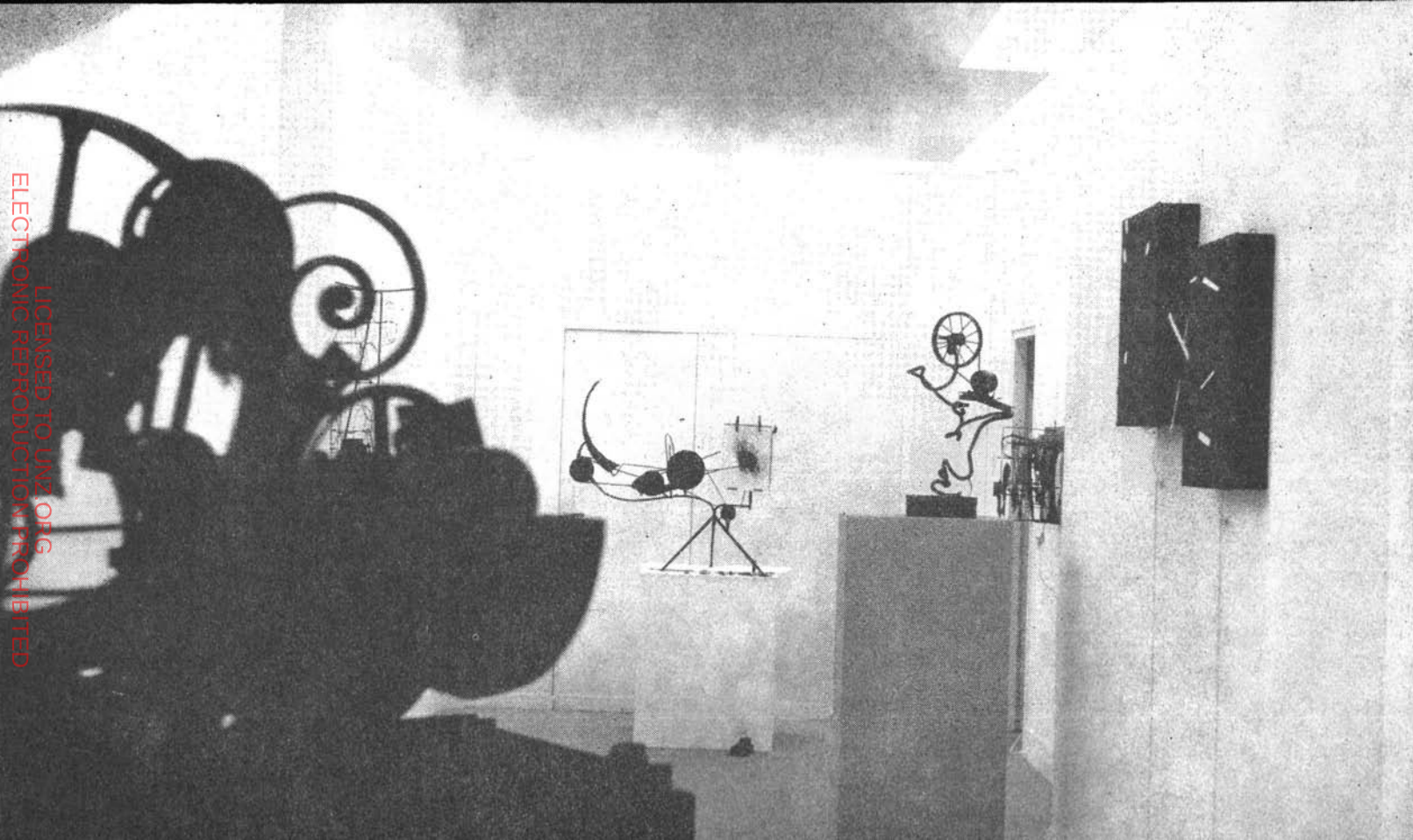

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Two Poems by Basil Bunting

I.

A thrush in the syringa sings.

"Hunger ruffles my wings, fear,
lust familiar things.

Death thrusts hard. My sons
by hawk's beak, by stones,
trusting weak wings
by cat and weasel, die.

Thunder smothers the sky.
From a shaken bush I
list familiar things,
fear, hunger, lust."

O gay thrush!

—1949

2.

Came to me—
    Who?
She.
    When?
In the dawn, afraid.

    What of?
Anger.
    Whose?
Her father's.
    Confide!

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I kissed her twice.
    Where?
On her moist mouth.
    Mouth?

No.
    What, then?
Cornelian.
    How was it?
Sweet!

(Rudaki, X century)
—BASIL BUNTING, 1949

Laurence Lieberman:

THE GUEST

Two who had loved in each other's eyes met strangeness.
Wonder at loss. Distance. It seemed as if

(we pondered alike) a third party, a guest,
who knew us both, and lived, or seemed to live,

in our relation (shadow), grew as we grew,
suffered what gave us pain and breathed our breath

of ardor, had grown between us like a thorn.
An apartness. Or lifted (perhaps) subtly and secretly

away, as a feather in a light wind, a thistle
disengaged... In our eyes, knowledge of loss.

Wonder at absence. Vacancy. Terror at peace,
at acceptance—easy adjustment to unspeakable emptiness.

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CORNERS

The whole man has no corners. He curves and curves.
Whatever goes in comes out the other side, or stays in

And takes his shape. Wherever you start in himself
You come back to the same place. But it isn't the same. The skin

Of his eyes is safe touch. If he cuts, he is not sharp.
Take the bird stuck in my office one day this summer.

I opened all the windows. He was furious.
He had to concentrate hard to fall through the closed

Windows. He was busy dissolving his atoms, one by one,
To squeeze through the glass. I must have confused his thinking.

Whenever I opened a window he flew to the next
Closed one, until there were no more to open.

Then he swung from wall to wall, from ceiling to floor,
Bruising his wings in the corners, and shrieking.

I leaned on the wall for support, to hear myself trying to cry.
If I fell from my mind for a moment, the floor would press me

Into the wall, my belt or my tie stuck in the corner,
Tugging me square in my body, or square on one side.

It would take just a minute. I ran from the room. I came back
To check on the bird. He was gone. Now this is true.

When I left, the corners softened to curves, and the room grew round.
The bird slid back into the world in a soft arc of lamentation.

—LAURENCE LIEBERMAN

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TO THE MUSE

Dear Cleo, I can't complain about your absence
Nor excuse my failure to call you sooner
I mistook you for your sister and
Now I thank you both, you one Lady
who changes before my eyes

QUEEN LIONESS OF HEAVEN IN THE SUN

...tangle of a dream, a history
waiting while I sleep I grind my teeth
or waking I watch your closed eyes
film of gold hair across your cheek
a mystery

a tangle, my impatience, your wildness
this persistence of vision centered in my own chest
(the print of your ear on my skin)

Your presence...
I'm high! My brains foam
I can't hear what you say
Quietly happily out of my mind

Madrones blossom on our mountain
Deer in thicket watch me pass:
Fawns and does,

Tawny and grey
Bless me as I walk along the fire-road

Who are the brilliance of that day
The glory of this night.

—PHILIP WHALEN

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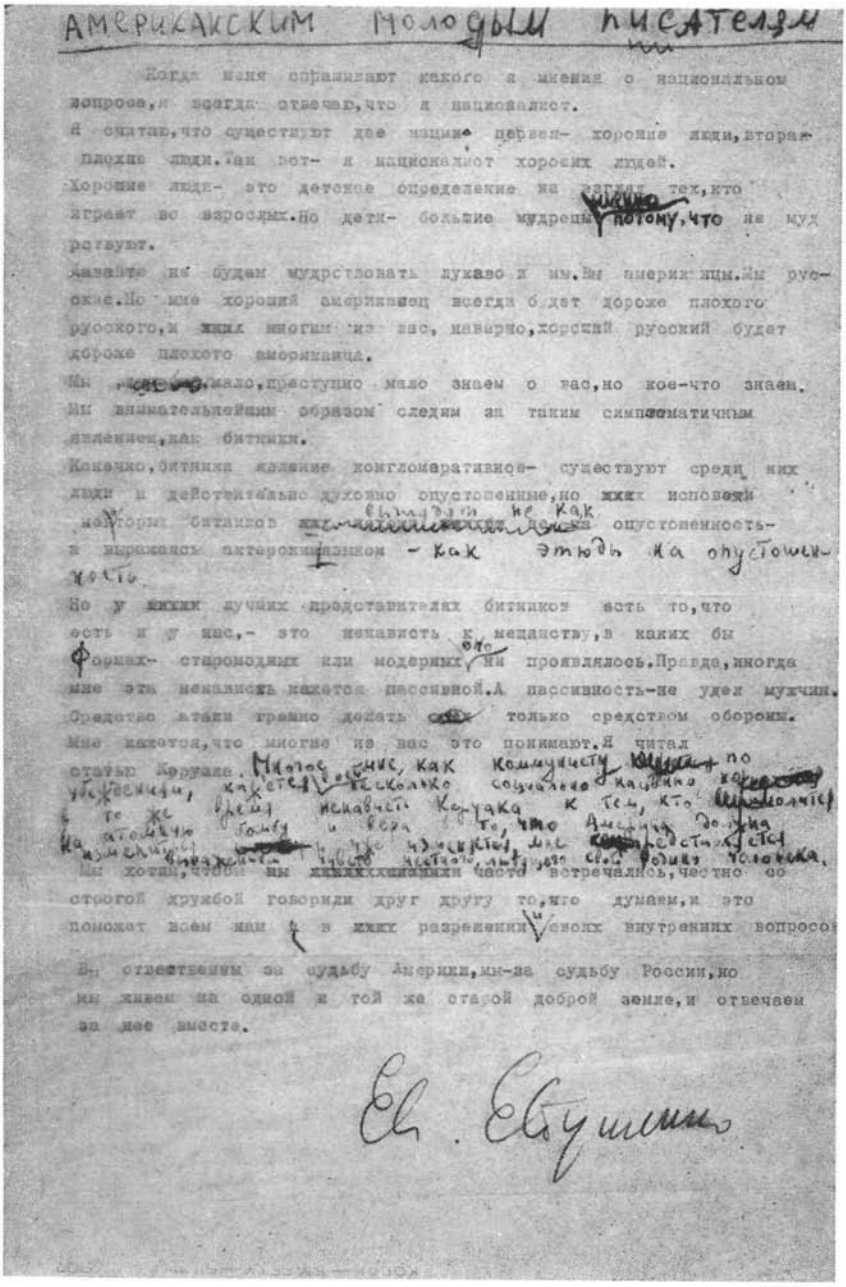

MSS. page of letter from Yevtushenko, Amerikaski Molodi Pysatlydni
(Advice to young American Authors)

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Yevtushenko reading in Paris [Photo court

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ɛny Yevtushenko

ɛral literary revival in Russia, which were so
en I interviewed Boris Pasternak for The
, have not been fulfilled—the events follow-
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e end of these hopes. In 1965, the prevailing
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ial calm, due to the oppressive (but not re-
uthorities; beneath this calm there are men

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of talent and passion producing often unpublished, but fortunately not always unread, manuscripts.

In 1965, Yevtushenko tells me that he still believes that a renewed Marxism might be reconciled with literary integrity; that the present system is not incompatible with human and artistic growth. This is an uncomfortable position today in Moscow, where a stifling Social Realism is the only sanctioned aesthetic doctrine. To hold his own view requires a heroism which has become Yevtushenko's trademark. He needs this heroism, for in the immediate post-Khrushchev era he has against him not only the official dogmatists, but many of his younger followers, who now criticize this leader of only a few years ago as not radical enough.

—OLGA CARLISLE

I.

I first met Yevgeny Yevtushenko during that winter of 1960, when many new poetic voices were being heard in Moscow. Stalin had not yet been officially denounced; one still came upon his mask-like effigy here and there. However, people averted their eyes from his portraits and avoided mentioning his name. The existence of concentration camps under the Stalinist regime was unmentioned except in small circles of friends behind closed doors, yet one could sense that everyone was engaged in a kind of private probing, a secret sorting out of fact from falsehood.

Intellectuals were becoming increasingly conscious of the vacuous climate in which they had been living for so long. In their meetings with me, my new acquaintances sometimes seemed to be breaking through some of their old fears for the first time: the fear of associating with a stranger, of evoking the past, of speaking one's mind. It was a rather awesome atmosphere—but also one filled with an amorphous hopefulness.

At that time Yevgeny Yevtushenko was already well-known in Moscow literary circles, but his face and personality were not yet familiar to millions of people in the U.S.S.R. and the West. Shortly before my trip, I had read some of his poems in Soviet literary magazines. They were outspoken and threw off a special aura of youthfulness—a kind of

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swinging, joyful poetic journalism, altogether free of the stock clichés about Soviet life.

Soon after my arrival in Moscow I took advantage of my father's acquaintance with the poet and telephoned him. I invited him to have tea with me one afternoon and also mentioned that my father had requested an inscribed volume of his poems. Yevtushenko accepted my invitation and was very friendly on the telephone, but I gathered that he found my father's request naïve. "Olga Vadimovna," he said, "clearly you are a newcomer to Moscow. Printings of poetry are sold out at once in our country. The twenty thousand copies of my most recent book of selected poems disappeared in two days. Not a single copy left. But, I'll recite some of my new verse to you," he added with warmth.

I was staying in the center of Moscow, which was then buried under a particularly heavy snowfall. In the somber, enormous Hotel Metropole, I occupied a suite of rooms furnished in Victorian style. It was panelled and heavily curtained in a manner perfectly appropriate to the Metropole's long-standing reputation as an establishment where foreigners and their guests were closely watched by the hotel's personnel, and perhaps even spied upon. But on the late afternoon of Yevtushenko's visit, no sooner had he arrived, removed his overcoat, shaken the snow flakes off his grey Astrakan fur hat and presented me with a large bunch of hothouse lilac, than my dusky suite brightened noticeably.

Yevtushenko is a very tall, ash-blond young man with a small head atop a long athletic body, pale blue, humorous eyes, a slender nose in a round face, and an open manner that was startling in the Moscow of those days. Oblivious of the oppressive surroundings, he sat down and without preamble talked about Russian poetry. He talked of himself, of the great poet of the twenties, Mayakovsky, and, at length, of contemporary Soviet poets. His generosity towards his fellow poets struck me at once; he named many, praising their poems, quoting whole stanzas of some: "Voznessenky and Ahmadulina are our most promising poets," he said. "Ahmadulina is in the great Russian tradition of women poets, of Ahmatova

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and Tsvetayeva. This is the tradition of high, unadulterated lyricism. She is my wife," he said, smiling, "and you must meet her. Alas, I myself belong to a less exalted poetic tradition. My verse is usually dictated by contemporary events, by sudden emotions—but such is the nature of my talent... when I am deeply moved, I am prompted to pour my feelings out at once in verse." As he spoke, Yevtushenko got up, moved around the room, sat in turn in every one of various over-stuffed armchairs, settling eventually on the dark blue velvet settee, his long legs crossed, stretched far into the room. But soon he stood up again to recite a poem of his own, one of several dedicated to Mayakovsky:

What is it destroyed Mayakovsky,
Put a revolver in his hand?
To him with his great voice, his nobility,
Let us offer some tenderness.
—Living people are such a nuisance
Tenderness is for those safely dead.

In the large sitting room—lit only by a desk lamp—he was an eccentric presence whose every movement was magnified in a play of huge shadows on the walls. He recited, his pointed profile so curiously at odds with his round face and high cheekbones, his long hands punctuating the lines with occasional broad gestures. He recited with theatrical dash, and his sonorous voice gave life to the poems, disguising their occasional thinness under a wave of emotion. His voice filled the room, as he looked over my head to an imaginary distance, creating in me an illusion of being in a vast auditorium among rows and rows of rapt listeners.

He recited from memory a long fragment of a poem he especially liked called, "An Ugly Little Girl," by the older poet Zabolotzky. Like his own poem to Mayakovsky, it is a plea for greater kindness in everyday life. Yevtushenko sat down, there was silence, then he spoke again in a passionate crescendo of statements: "The need to restore warmth to people's lives is our most imperative task. This alone can

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save us, save the whole planet. And, too, the Russian people have suffered too long. It is up to us to do something about this now. To create a climate of kindness, to let people open up and flower again. How will we ever make up for the injustice, the stupidity and the blood if we don't start now? There is nothing in our Communist society to prevent this flowering, quite the contrary; but first we must conquer our inner fears... many poets have done this, there is nothing blocking their inspiration any longer: all the great themes of our times are theirs. The prose writers have a harder time. Russian prose has suffered from years of stifling censorship, which affected poetry less insofar that it circulates orally with the greatest of ease. However, there are several promising prose writers in my generation: Dudintzev's *New Year Tale* shows clearly that he has matured since the days of *Not By Bread Alone*. Then there is Yury Kazakov whom you should read at once: in my opinon he is the best prose writer of the younger generation. He writes in a renewed, yet deeply Russian tradition, that of Anton Chekov: compassion is his theme..."

Disdaining detailed explanations, Yevtushenko expected me to understand, perhaps to share his convictions, which he expressed in flowing sentences full of old-fashioned metaphors. Yet for all his rhetoric, he wasted no time on conversational amenities. He seemed possessed by an urge to get directly to the truth, and in this he reminded me a little of a New York beatnik. "We have entered a new age. In the name of communism we are looking for truth—in ourselves, in others. We often find it in simpler people," he added, voicing a traditional Russian conviction. "Truth is as delicate as a tender plant. It has survived a harsh winter and now will grow."

Yevtushenko was fascinated by the idea of the old Russian intelligentsia, particularly by its spirit of universality. "This spirit," he said, "the world has to recapture if it is to survive." He spoke of the birth of a new intelligentsia in the U.S.S.R.: "It is like trying to catch a flow of water in the palm of your hand," he said. "Most of it flows out but a little is retained in the cup of the hand. This is happening now. We and our

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children will eventually retain this little amount of water as against the mainstream—but of course the ever-increasing mainstream is our first concern. The fact that the Soviet government has been able to open the world of good books to the masses of people gives us faith in the future of Russia..." Throughout our conversation—which at times seemed to me a sort of morality play—Yevtushenko speaking in the name of a dynamic and purified Soviet Union and I taking the part of the West—he would return to the problem of discovering unifying ideas which would insure happiness and peace to Russia and the rest of the world. I had the feeling that through me, he wanted to be heard by Western intellectuals. He was intensely curious about Western intellectual life, the latest movements in painting and writing, and asked many questions about the Beat poets and the New York action painters.

Tea was brought and our conversation turned to the special role of poetry in present-day Russia. Yevtushenko spoke of the huge spellbound crowds who listened to the young poets, of printings of their works of fifty thousand copies sold out in a day (not to be reprinted until the Plan, rather than the demand, dictated). I was never to hear him so eloquent about it as on this first tea-drinking meeting. At a moment of increasing political tolerance he was himself just sizing up the power of poetry—more specifically his own poems—and of his own personality. The force of verse expressing the long bottled-up emotions of a crowd was then a relatively new discovery to him: at that time, through an ever-growing number of public readings given by himself and other young poets, poetry was just beginning to carry a promise of honesty all over Russia: it was the first wedge to be driven into a monolithic system of stereotyped ideas and reactions.

Yevtushenko was in the process of becoming a national symbol: the denunciation of Stalinism was being initiated at the level of poetry. By the end of my long conversation with him, I knew I had heard a persuasive public voice, a spokesman for a whole generation. Here was someone bigger and brighter than life, but also a kind of conventional romantic

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hero: Yevtushenko imitated Mayakovsky, or rather an image coined by Mayakovsky—that of a flamboyant, proletarian young poet of the Revolution. The emphatic directness of his whole style gave great weight to whatever he said, even if the flamboyance was something of a pose, a deliberate game. For Yevtushenko has a special talent for improvisation in real life as in his poetry; when he chooses to, he can write a poem on a designated theme in one afternoon.

I remember on each of my subsequent encounters with him displays of his sparkling imaginativeness. Usually the center of attention, he instinctively recognized the dramatic possibilities in situations, in modern provocative ideas, and seized on them avidly, as actor, as poet, intent on giving, through his personality, a memorable stamp to ephemeral events. He acknowledges this bent for performance, relating it to Pasternak's, who "nobly acted out his life" (Pasternak, *Hamlet*): though Yevtushenko's acting is more of a conscious effort, more studied than Pasternak's ever was. In Leningrad later that winter, drinking champagne among friends and making a marvelous, elaborate toast to the glory of Pushkin, whose city we were then visiting: "To Pushkin, who smells of snow and champagne..." One year later in New York I saw him at an academic reception where, after reciting his breezy, optimistic, "On a Bicycle," he answered many thorny political questions, disarming the rather hostile, solemnly anti-Soviet audience with his suave shrewdness. In a taxicab in Moscow in the carefree spring of 1962, he recited his "Ballad of the Beatniks." Four of us were on our way to the Moscow Artists' Union where, as a result of the relaxed political mood of that period, Yevtushenko's friend, the painter Yury Vassiliev, was to speak on his ideas about experimentation in art. The "Ballad of the Beatniks" electrified Yevtushenko's audience of five, including the taxicab driver who pulled momentarily against the curb, "so that I may fully taste the beauty of art without endangering your lives," as he explained it. The not overly-sophisticated Russian rhymes sounded terrific as he recited:

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...The twentieth century dumbfounded us.
Lies were heavy as taxes.
Like dandelion seeds
Ideas blew away from living breath
...
And our hands laughed applauding
And our feet grinned and danced...

II.

In Moscow during the spring of 1962 I saw Yevtushenko often. Moscow had undergone great changes since my first visit there. It was a gayer, busier city, now hard to get around in. Moscovites struggled energetically for the available taxis, whose fares had been lowered. People seemed better off than they had been in the winter of '59–'60. A holiday atmosphere prevailed for several weeks: that year the first of May celebration and Orthodox Easter coincided. The weather was warm. Moscow had been invaded by shoppers from out of town. Peasant woman carried shopping bags bursting with the staples purchased from well-stocked Moscow stores—everything needed to prepare the traditional Easter *paska* and *kulitsh*. The women looked as if they came out of the depths of Russia, with their kerchiefs and wide skirts and round faces. It was very much of a political occasion too: Lenin's portraits were to be seen everywhere, the city was hung with innumerable red and pale blue flags. The two celebrations didn't seem incompatible though, quite the contrary: most Moscovites were planning their week end so as to make the most of both festivities.

As friendly and open as ever, Yevtushenko now glowed with success: he was the semi-official spokesman of the liberally minded youth. He had traveled to the U.S., to Europe, and as a *Pravda* correspondent to Cuba, where he had been befriended by Fidel Castro; it was rumored that he was on the eve of being admitted to the Party. He had been divorced

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from the brilliant, mercurial poetess, Bella Ahmadulina, and was now happily married to blue-eyed Gallya. Gallya, slightly older than Yevtushenko, is a poised, intelligent brunette who has the reputation in Moscow of having first-rate taste in literary matters.

Yevtushenko and Gallya had just moved into a flat situated in a large new complex of buildings planned expressly for members of the Writers' Union and their families. It is far from the center of town along the wide Kiev highway, in a fast-growing new district, where tall brick developments are erected next to old suburban log houses. The area hadn't been landscaped yet, the dug-up streets were still unnamed. Inside the buildings, the apartments were not yet numbered.

The Yevtushenkos' place was already decorated in a particular Moscow fashion: a dash of contemporary Scandinavian and a little folklore—lovely Ukrainian ceramic toys—are mixed with objects which seem out of the twenties, armchairs full of unfunctional angles and complicated geometric patterns. All in all, the effect was gay and hospitable.

These were hectic days for the poet and his wife: they were about to leave for London on an official tour. The apartment was the scene of constant comings and goings: Gallya was packing, the telephone which had just been connected rang incessantly. Friends of the Yevtushenkos dropped in to say goodbye. Many came to look at their collection of paintings: Yevtushenko, who is very proud of this collection, had just finished hanging it. Like the apartment's decor, it had a vague 1920's look, with a majority of rather crude surrealistic works by Moscow painters, but some good painting also. There was a handsome, monumental canvas by Nihonov, of men playing cards; a set of working drawings by the sculptor Ernst Neizvestni, strong and expressionistic; and several competent abstractions that Yevtushenko had brought back from Cuba.[1]

Despite this rush Yevtushenko agreed to be interviewed for *The Paris Review*. I had dinner at the Yevtushenkos' on the

[1] Nihonov and Neizvestni were the principal targets of official wrath at the Manege show in December, 1962.

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evening set for the interview. It was still daylight when we sat down to a supper of steak and small ripe tomatoes, the latter being one of Yevtushenko's favorite foods. There was a huge platter of them and they matched the bright decor created by the versatile Yury Vassiliev, a friend of Yevtushenko's who had used painted wooden spoons and Ukrainian popular motifs to relieve the standardized proportions of the kitchen where we ate. Through the window, a smell of *tcheremoukha* came into the kitchen (this is the alder blossom which appears so often in Russian poetry, and whose heavy smell was unknown to me until that spring). The sun was slowly setting behind a landscape of foamy green trees and huge construction cranes.

The Yevtushenkos were in an excellent mood. We celebrated the occasion with champagne. Thus, like many of Yevtushenko's undertakings, the interview was something of a glamorous improvisation and was preceeded by much animated conversation and elaborate toasts, an important part of festive Russian dining. Finally, when the table was cleared and Gallya was packing in the next room, Yevtushenko and I moved into the living room. The poet's desk stood there, an elaborate Scandinavian design, with rounded lines, livened by a huge photograph of Hemingway in his middle years and an inscribed portrait of Castro—two bearded deities presiding over our exchange. We continued to drink the sweet, mellow Soviet champagne.

Yevtushenko declined to answer those questions which particularly intrigued me then about international trends in literature—or the possible correspondances between certain Soviet poets and the younger generation of American writers. But he was obviously delighted to answer other questions, especially those dealing with art. We were surrounded by works by Vassiliev and Neizvestni and it was about them that Yevtushenko spoke first. Then, as we proceeded with the interview, he sat down at his desk and typed out his answers, sometimes interrupting himself to recite a poem which emphasized the point he wanted to make. He was relaxed and gay, getting up at times to walk around the room and look

Neizvestni: Study for a sculptnre. →

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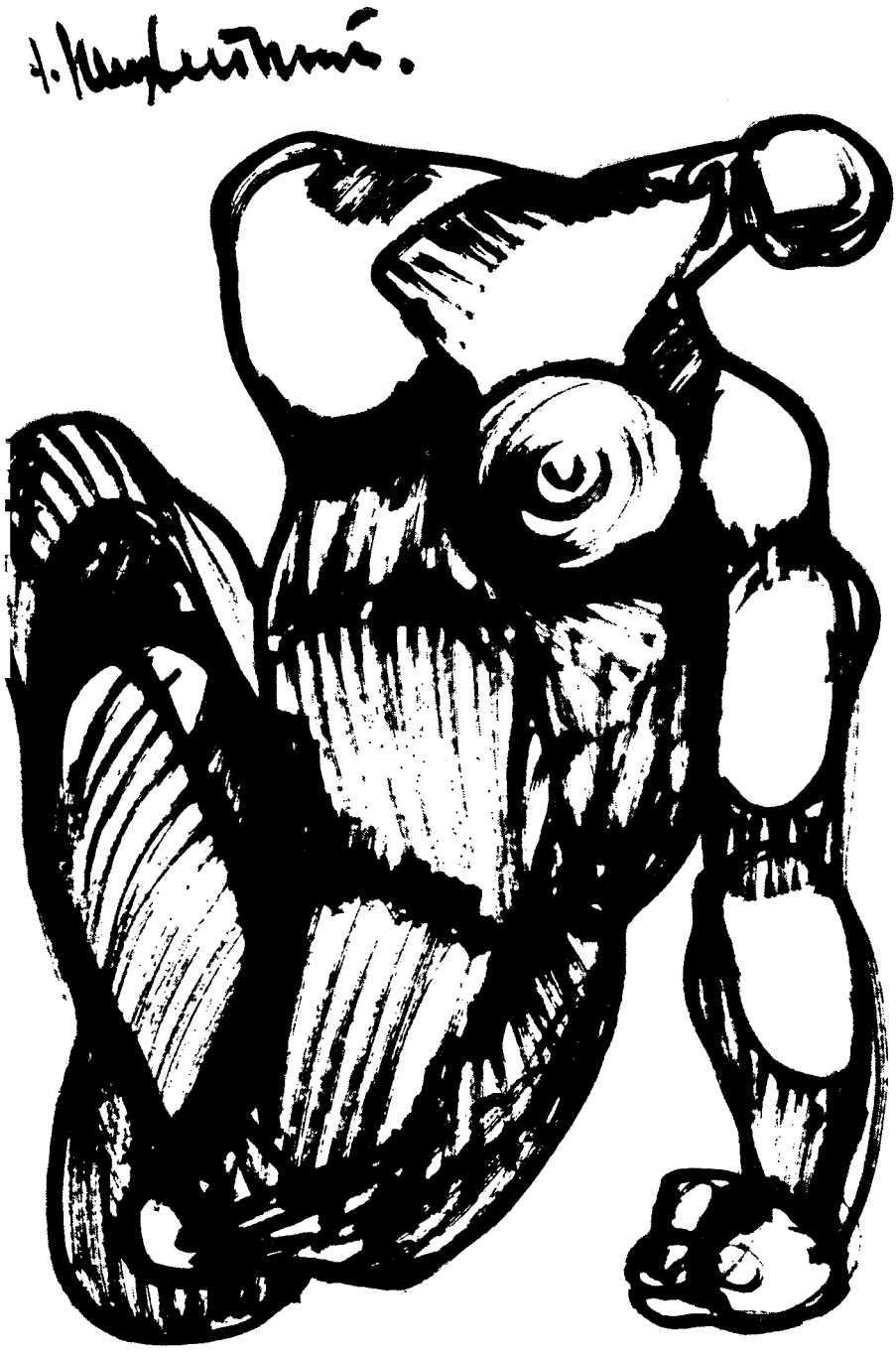

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out of the window, displaying the same restless energy that I remembered from my first meeting with him.

"To me, Ernest Neizvestni is the most talented sculptor at work today in the U.S.S.R. Neizvestni is a sculptor in a class with Henry Moore. Yet Ernest is only thirty-eight years old, and he has grown in an all-Russian artistic atmosphere. His works are an excellent example of a completely centered, yet outwardly scattered, approach to art. This is disconcerting to a Western viewer, you have come to value a superficial, smooth unity of style too highly, Neizvestni is a Realist in the grand sense of this word. In art, I see as realism whatever is directly, imperiously dictated by life. Neizvestni's most realistic works, though, always contain an element of the fantastic, a dimension in depth, while his imaginary works retain an element of realism. Picasso appeals to me for the same reason: his outward eclecticism is in fact the manifestation of the highest kind of concentration. Picasso is a fire, his flames may reach in all directions, but his essence is always one.

"As for Vassiliev, he has the same impulse as Picasso, he wants to try everything—oil, ceramic, metal, mosaic, stone... He takes chances, he is not afraid of failures; even when he frankly imitates, he manages to remain himself. His energy is astonishing. Although he might not belong to the main thread of modern art, he is a kind of knot holding this thread which was cut during the "cult of personality" era. Don't you think there is great merit in being a knot, even though a crude one, making a courageous attempt at holding together broken ends?" (Yevtushenko said this sensing that I was no great admirer of much of Soviet avant-garde painting, which is full of rather obvious symbols out of the Surrealist era.) Knowing that Yevtushenko was interested in art in that peculiar Russian fashion which considers painting as an extension of literature rather than a world of its own, and wishing to avoid an argument—for we had a running disagreement on the subject of painting—I asked him what he thought about the future of Soviet poetry.

"Happy changes are taking place in our lives right now," he answered, "and they are felt in many realms. In the realm

Neizvestni: A recent sculpture (approximately 1 foot high) ←

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of literature, it is in poetry that they manifest themselves most clearly. There are many new poetic trends in Russia now, like many horses galloping and racing each other, they overturn the mossy cobblestones of past thinking...

"Some people of course continue to think cobblestone thoughts, but in my opinion to view Russian poetry with irony and skepticism today is almost a crime. Where else in the world does poetry have the impact it has in the Soviet Union; Where else do poets express their country's deepest aspirations?"

Yevtushenko then told me about the Day of Poetry, a yearly festival which has progressively grown in scope, and which is marked now by the publication of an annual anthology of the poets participating.

"When some years ago the poet Vladimir Lugovskoy proposed that a public recital of poetry be held every year in the Fall, not everyone believed in its success; but the Day of Poetry is now part of Russian life, an institution, an occasion for popular rejoicing... On this day, poets climb on counters in bookstores, they sell their autographed books, they read their verse and meet their readers. This takes place all over the country, but in Moscow it has a special amplitude. That evening, Moscovite poets assemble near Mayakovsky's statue and read again, this time in front of a huge crowd of eight or ten thousand people. The listeners stand for hours on end, even though the October wind blows hard. There have been years when snow fell that day, but the crowd did not disband; it stood listening in the storm."

I ventured to say that lack of popular entertainment might partly account for the following the poets commanded.

"No, no," protested Yevtushenko, "those readings are *not* organized frivolity. No artistic activity as esoteric as poetry can have a massive following unless it has something mature to say. Go to a Moscow bookstore, try to buy the poetic works of Ahmatova, those of Bella Ahmadulina or Boris Slutsky or Andrei Voznessensky. The booksellers will only shrug their shoulders at you...

"Two factors in my opinion may explain this. First, the

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poets I just named are true poets—the time when courtiers flattered their master through verse writing and called themselves poets is altogether over. But we also have in the U.S.S.R. many excellent readers, attentive and discriminating. This is not to say that the poets I have just mentioned (and many others, excellent poets whose names would mean nothing to Westerners) adapt themselves to the taste of the readers, however cultivated this taste may be. On the contrary, those poets contribute to the sharpening of public taste, they form and widen this taste, and this is their most important function. Incidentally, all the poets I speak of could not be more different from one another. Voznessensky has a kind of 'atomic style' full of breathtaking, rhythmic pirouettes. Akhmadulina is restrained, she is a painstaking jewelsmith of words, yet she is lyricial, completely of our time. Boris Slutsky, on the other hand, is altogether deprived of atomic surge, he is a stonecutter, a poet as virile as a stonecutter. Martinov can be cryptic, an inventor of charades. In his verse, profound philosophical themes are hidden under a graceful melodic disguise.

"Among the older poets, Alexander Tvardovsky stands out, but now he moves us less than he used to.[1] In my opinion he is a magnificent poet, but his verse lacks magic—however, such is his poetic gift. Under our eyes, what Mayakovsky once dreamt of is taking place:

Only one thing to me is important:
That there be poets,
Many excellent, different poets!

"Traditionally, Russian poetry probes those questions which move us most, from intricate political queries to fine psychological points...Russian poetry was never exclusively descriptive, nor psychological, nor didactic, nor melodic. (I speak now about good poets only; they alone are represent-

[1] Tvardovsky is one of the editors of the liberally-inclined literary periodical, *Novii Mir* and the author of the anti-Stalinist satirical poem, *Tierkin in the Other World*, published in 1963.

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ative.) Russian poetry is made up of all those elements, but it also usually contains a measure of serious political thought.

"Without exception, all our better poets today continue this tradition. This is why they are loved. This is why windowpanes burst in the public meeting halls where poetry recitals are held. The militia has trouble containing the crowds eager to hear the poets. These crowds are intense, responsive, often enthusiastic. But there is nothing subversive or scandalous in those readings, as is sometimes suggested... If there are people to whom interest in poetry seems scandalous, we will not bother with them. Such 'scandals' are the people's choice.

"Our audience is not an hysterical fringe. It is made up of workers, of students, of scientists. We poets feel that their interest and trust in us is in some measure a step forward into the future. We shall try not to disappoint them."

I asked him who he considered his literary masters.

"I always try to take anything that interests me from anyone—and yet try to remain myself. As you see, I go back to my notion of an eclectic art—yet one solidly centered, innerly held together by the force of one's personality. Let me say, however, that Pushkin is my favorite figure in all of Russian letters. Also I love Blok, Mayakovsky, Pasternak... Essenin influenced me. All have helped me in various, often evident ways. I would be happy to know for sure that even one of my own lines will have served a poet in the future. In fact. this is how I would state my artistic ambition: to be able to write such a line... Incidentally, I love Walt Whitman. I also have a predilection for Paul Verlaine because of the melodic aspect of his verse. It may seem quaint to you but I once wrote a poem under the direct influence of 'Chanson d'Automne.'"

What about contemporary Western influences? I inquired.

"As I see it, Hemingway is the strongest influence here," said Yevtushenko. "Early works by Remarque are also widely read. St. Exupéry has reached us only lately, one finds elements suggested by him in contemporary Soviet writing. *Catcher in the Rye* is a great success. We are very much open to

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Western writers, and we may occasionally borrow their techniques. These borrowings are only sporadically successfull; they often turn out to be sterile. On the other hand they sometimes lead to something organic, they help us grow.

"One Soviet poet for example is much influenced by the poetic intonation of Jacques Prévert but in his verse this intonation is transformed into something entirely new and Russian. In Voznessensky there is a curious mixture of the Rimbaud of 'Le Bateau Ivre' with the clash and dissonances of an Allen Ginsberg, but Voznessensky remains a completely original poet..."

There was a ring at the door. Friends had arrived to wish the Yevtushenkos a good journey, bringing presents and several bottles of champagne. This meant the end of my interviewing, and though we had several more conversations in 1962, and again in 1965, Yevtushenko did not substantially alter the opinions expressed in this "formal" interview.

We stayed on and on, talking into the Spring night, the windows open on a dark, balmy Moscow. The conversation dealt with Russia and the West, with poetry and painting. Yevtushenko's visitors were artist and poets, and they all rejoiced in his good fortune at making the trip; I was struck by the great yearning for intensified exchanges with foreign countries on the part of these young Russians. Now, 3 years later, nothing is done to allow visits abroad by the most talented Soviet artists and painters; instead, "official"-minded and unimaginative writers are all too often sent on cultural exchanges.

III.

Yevtushenko, who has deliberately tried to overcome Soviet cultural provincialism, has time and again reiterated his faith in the existence of a "community of good people" throughout the world, regardless of their political or national allegiances. In the winter of 1962–1963, an official campaign was launched to squelch this view, which is held to be unorthodox from the Communist standpoint. In an effort to

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discredit Yevtushenko in the eyes of his young Soviet contemporaries, among whom he is so popular, another prestigeous young man was called on: the cosmonaut Yury Gagarin. Gagarin denounced Yevtushenko's want of patriotism in publishing abroad his autobiography without the sanction of the Writers' Union. Needless to say, the aviator's voice was not strong enough to smother Yevtushenko's. The young generation led by Yevtushenko has been heard across the Soviet Union; it has thrilled the Soviet public; this thrill is still reverberating across the country. The young poets have become known internationally, showing just how anachronistic the wall of Soviet cultural isolationism is.

Yevtushenko has demonstrated something else, too—unexpected not only in Russia but anywhere today: that a dashing young poet, speaking for freedom, might command the same sort of popular audience now as Lord Byron and Victor Hugo did in the days of Romanticism.Like those two poets, Yevtushenko's power is to be found in his whole personality, rather than in literary achievement alone.

Yevtushenko has helped earn the possibility of surviving, for himself and other members of his generation: if it were not for the years of his cunning yet generous public performance he and those he has praised might all have been crushed in the 1962–1963 drive against non-conformity in Soviet art.

Yet, because of the unchanging, ideological dogmas prevailing in Russia today, and also because of his own artistic limitations, Yevtushenko is unable to satisfy fully the Soviet public's urge for freedom of expression, a freedom which he himself was the first to initiate. Such is often the fate of innovators. In 1965, a new, more demanding generation of readers often finds that he is too superficial in his themes, too much in love with his own image, too ready to alter a line at the demand of an editor.

But no one has yet replaced him on the literary scene, not even Andrei Voznessensky, an excellent poet of the same generation, who is both a close friend and a rival. Yevtushenko's leadership does, however, show signs of fading. In the uncertain atmosphere now prevailing in Moscow, there seems on

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the part of the public an ever-increasing urge for truth. And on the part of the functionaries who control literary matters, an increasing fear of it.

—OLGA CARLISLE

GOING TO CHICAGO

For all I can do,
A last barn, dark as a plug of chewing tobacco,
Crumbles into chipmunk holes. Then
Twilight lifts its mist and crickets from a broad field of stalks.
I grope and call
My father (I'm back, a boy, in a dark bedroom)
To bring me water. I hear
Only the rust eating the farm machines.

Lord, I say, I am shaken;
This mattress of dirt won't bounce a bug.
I used to sleep on ripples. Now I nap
Where I drop in a pasture of odds and ends.
Ants spit in this wind;
A sharp cough recoils to peel the corn:
Save me the husk of myself?

But he is gone on canned heat,
Flopped on a cot of leaves
In a field by a freight yard.
He is snoozing after blessing
Something public and papal, ale and flags in the bleachers.
I sit down to think till he wakes.

The distant funnels of miles
Of war plants all night burn their wastes.

—LEWIS MEYERS

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Jacksongrad

Harry Mathews

A DISAPPOINTING INNING

Mannish Madame Nevtaya slowly cried "Fur bowls!" and the Fideist batter, alert to the sense behind the sound of her words, jogged towards first base. The wind from the northern steppe blew coldly on the close of our season.

The Fideist division received the camp's worst villains, and its team assembled their dregs. Among us Defective Baptists a love of baseball signified gentleness; among Fideists, cruelty. Consider their team of murderers.

Left field: Sydney Valsalva, undertaker's assistant and supplier to necrophiliacs, kidnaped infants for beheading.

Center field: Lynn Petomik, dentist, mutilated the mouths of patients, killing one.

Pitcher: Hilary Cheyne-Stokes, gynecologist, committed equivalent crimes.

1st base: Tommy Withering, dilettante, flayed a younger brother.

Shortstop: Evelyn Roak, surgeon, supplied human fragments to a delicatessen, and was undone by scandalous amputations.*

(2nd base: Cecil Meli, nurse, had been unjustly jailed.)

Right field: Lee Donders, grocer, transformed Roak's material into "Donders' Delicacies".

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* For example, removing, together with a troublesome spur of bone, the index and ring fingers of my left hand. I was then a violinist.

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Catcher: Marion Gullstrand, obstetrician, tortured unwed mothers.

3rd base: Leslie Auenbrugger, psychiatrist—the "Restroom Bomber".

Valsalva had walked. Since I was catcher, I went out to the mound to say a few words of encouragement. The second batter grounded to third, forcing Valsalva; the next struck out; and the Fideists' turn at bat would have ended with Withering's high foul if, failing to allow for the wind, I had not misjudged it. Withering singled on the next pitch.

I was thus obliged to execute my plan in the first inning of the game. Having foreseen the possibility, I drew a prepared ball from my chest-protector to substitute it for the one in play.

I had made the ball myself. It was built around two unusual parts—a tiny battery and an ounce of dynamite. From each of the battery's outlets, a wire extended through the hair stuffing of the ball about halfway to the leather wrapper. The free ends of the wires, one of which passed through a firing-cap fixed to the dynamite, were eight millimeters apart—enough to prevent their junction at a mild impact, but not at a sufficiently hard one. The difference, which I had determined exactly, was that between a fast pitch caught and a slow pitch hit. The wire-ends separated into meshing sprays of filament, so that no matter how the ball was struck, it was certain to explode.

To shield myself, I had reinforced my equipment with layers of nylon in the chest-protector, steel in the cap and shin-guards, and a lucite screen inside the mask.

For Madame Nevtaya's protection, I counted on her thick skin.

I expected the explosion to do three things: create confusion that would cover my actions; stun and knock down the batter; explain the batter's death. I knew that the bomb itself would kill no one; but I had concealed in my right shin-guard, ready to use at once after the ball had been detonated, a small hypodermic of curare.

Evelyn Roak stood at the plate. To my dismay, the first

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three pitches were low—our pitcher remarked later on the ball's imbalance. The fourth was a perfect strike, and my hopes revived. At the next delivery the batter drew back to swing, but the pitch was wild—it sailed past my outstretched glove as I lunged at it, skittered over the ground behind home plate, off the playing field altogether, at last disappearing irretrievably, and with an abysmal liquid reverberation, into a drain.

MY DENTAL APPRENTICESHIP

The camp at Jacksongrad, in which I was completing my second year, had kept its prerevolutionary structure through historical, ideological and geographic change. Established during the Holy Alliance for the internment of heretics, it had since the eighties received offenders of every sort. Recently it had been transplanted intact, down to the last dossier, prisoner and guard, to its present southerly location.

The camp's organization was still sectarian: on arrival, prisoners were arbitrarily and finally committed to the Americanist, Darbyist, Defective Baptist, Fideist or Resurrectionist divisions. Although the assignments were theologically haphazard, the divisions had real unity. Particular types flourished in particular sects, and were perhaps knowingly allotted to them; and the descendants of the first religious prisoners, faithful to their traditions, exerted a constant influence on their fellows.

This influence was strengthened by the ban on all political and nonconformist discussion, and by the strict segregation of the sects. Fideists and Resurrectionists, Americanists and Darbyists only met on exceptional occasions, such as concerts, civic debates and athletic encounters. Even then the guards held intercourse to a minimum, and the mere exchange of greetings was beset with preventions and penalties.

Such circumstances had inspired the plan so unsuccessfully executed at the Fideist ball game. The stratagem was not my first.

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When, soon after my arrival, the camp authorities had asked me to choose a professional activity, I had refused. Because I was a musician, I was urged to join the camp orchestra, band or choir; but I had been too recently maimed to think of taking up the euphonium or singing hymns. The cultural administrator, irked by my refusal, had relegated me to the dental infirmary.

This was meant as a punishment, and proved a boon. The dental clinic had an evil reputation in the camp; but this reflected, more than its drabness and inadequate equipment, the mentality of its director, a martinet who spared neither his patients nor his assistants. When I reported to the clinic, this person had just been replaced by a kind and intelligent woman dentist, Dr. Zarater. She had been appointed by the authorities to apply a more humane policy, and she was empowered to reorganize the clinic according to her own high standards.

My relations with Dr. Zarater were good from the start. When I reported to work, she at once remarked on the fitness of my left hand, reduced to three spaced digits, for working inside the mouth. "No tool (she said) is as good as a finger, but with five it's like using your foot." She questioned me tactfully about my mishap, then about my life. When in the course of our conversation I mentioned the name of R. King Dri, Dr. Zarater's interest quickened; for she herself had studied with Dr. King Dri and hoped to use the camp clinic to demonstrate his methods.

From that moment to the end of my time in Jacksongrad, Dr. Zarater treated me with special affection.

Who was R. King Dri? I had learned of him quite by chance some years before when, leafing through old magazines in a dentist's waiting room, I came across a letter about him in a 1930 issue of *Dental Cosmos*.

King Dri called himself the "Philosopher-Dentist". Victim of a long history of dental ailments that classical remedies could not relieve, he had invented to explain his own case a new theory of the human organism, and deduced from it new surgical techniques.

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He describes the origin of the theory in his one treatise, a prodigious work that opens with a humble declaration of intent:

"Either men will think that the nature of toothache is wholly mysterious and incomprehensible, or that a man like myself, who has suffered from it thirty-six years, must be of a slow and sluggish disposition not to have discovered more respecting the nature and treatment of a disease so peculiarly his own. Be this as it may, I will give a bona fide account of what I know."

Dri then relates how, refusing extraction, he had little by little so lost his strength through his chronic ailment that he was at last obliged to take to his bed, spending four months in total immobility. ("Movement," he writes, "is one of the greatest troubles in toothache, since, with perfect quiet, the agony is just tolerable.") It was thus bedridden that Dri began talking to his teeth, at first cursing them, then praying to them, and finally addressing them as sensible beings in need of consolation and reassurance. A prompt diminution of pain and swelling followed Dri's first attempt at "internal charity". After three weeks of it, several afflicted teeth, including the one first smitten thirty-six years before, stopped aching. Only two failed to respond. After another ten days spent comforting them, the doctor decided that they knew themselves unfit for continued life in his body, wished to be free of it, but were unwilling, perhaps for fear of the unknown world outside, to take the initiative of leaving him. Dri thereupon patiently assuaged their fear, explaining that there was only one escape from their predicament, and that by delaying to choose it they were exacerbating their suffering, not to mention his own. In a week, without being touched, the reluctant teeth fell out.

King Dri's conclusion from this experiment might be summarized thus:

The human body, richest of nature's fruits, is not a single organism made up of constituent parts, but an assemblage of entities on whose voluntary collaboration the functioning of the whole depends. "The body is analogous to a political

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confederation—not to the *federation* it is normally supposed to be." Every entity within the body is endowed with its own psyche, more or less developed in awareness, but conscious—and self-conscious—nonetheless. (Aching teeth can be compared to temperamental six-year-old children; an impotent penis to an adolescent girl who must be cajoled out of her sulkiness.) Most advanced of all entities is the heart, which at the center of the body does not govern but presides over it with loving persuasiveness, like an experienced but still vigorous father in his household of relatives and pets. Health exists when the various entities are happy, for they then perform their roles properly and coöperate with one another. Disease appears when some member of the organism rejects its vocation. Medicine intervenes to bring the wayward member back to its place in the body's little society. At best, the heart makes its own medicine, convincing the rebel of its love by speaking to it with patience and understanding; but a doctor is often needed to encourage the communication of heart and member, and sometimes, if the patient is incapable of performing the task, to undertake it himself.

In his treatise Dr. Dri gives many examples of such intervention. The following paragraph, the close of an address to the infected canine of a sixteen-year-old boy, may suggest the Indian's stature.

"You say, 'Is not the goal of life to die rather than to live, not to leave death to others but to accede to it voluntarily, giving one's self up with rejoicing?' No! that is neither joy, nor liberty, nor grace, nor eternal life; which are in your father's love. Child of my being! Flesh of my flesh! As distant from death as the morning star is from a farm's smoky fire, when that fair virgin on the sun's breast lays her radiant head, may your father in his infinite love behold you forever in that place reserved for you! Next to such life, what is death worth? And what is life worth if not given to him? Must you torment yourself, when obedience is so sweet? Return and say: 'Now I have all! Everything is at my feet, I am as one who, on seeing a tree laden with fruit, and having mounted the ladder, feels a depth of branches bend under his body.

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I shall speak beneath the tree, as a flute neither too grave nor too shrill. Behold I am lifted upon the waters! Love unseals the rock of my heart! So let me live! Let me grow thus mingled with my father, like the vine with the olive tree.'" The tooth was cured.

The medical profession had not taken R. King Dri seriously during his lifetime, despite the attractiveness of his theory and the undeniable results he achieved in Punjab dental wards. According to Dr. Zarater, however, a revival of interest in the philosopher-dentist had distinguished recent stomatological writings in Europe, where a movement was under way to obtain legal recognition of his teaching.

During eight months as Dr. Zarater's assistant, I learned much about the clinical uses of King Dri's theory, as well as the rudiments of traditional dentistry. With the directress's help I made such rapid progress that after only four months' training I was able to treat simple cases.

I had hardly begun exercising this responsibility when a valuable patient was assigned to me. I had hoped to benefit from my position: as the clinic ministered to the entire camp, I would inevitably meet members of sects other than my own. But I was especially lucky that one of the first of these should be a young Fideist woman named Yana, celebrated throughout Jacksongrad for her beauty and visible good nature: more pertinently, Evelyn Roak was in love with her.

In order to see her often, I prolonged Yana's treatment; and I wooed her myself. (Dear Yana! I became devoted to her. Even when she lost her usefulness, I remained her friend.)

My courtship succeeded: Yana and I began meeting secretly in a storeroom of the clinic. Then as always we were obliged to address each other by gesture or in writing. Yana spoke no English, although she had learned to read and write it in school. One useful if unforeseen consequence of this was that during our exchanges we evolved a written code. At the time it was little more than a game between us; later, when meeting became harder and we had to rely on letters, the code preserved our relationship.

I was passionate with Yana but unpossessive—I had no

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wish to anger her Fideist suitor, for whom I feigned admiration. Lest this arouse suspicion, I asked Yana not to mention me by name. "A dangerous political matter," I explained.

Meanwhile I had Yana deliver to her Fideist friend a succession of anonymous gifts, chiefly items then scarce in the camp—absorbent cotton, airmail stationery, Swiss toothpaste.

Seven of the presents were innocuous. The eighth and last, which I myself prepared in the dental laboratory, was a box of caramels. Dr. Petomi's career suggested their composition. I mixed into the caramel sugar a few ounces of crystalline oxylous acid. This chemical, normally inactive, combines with certain phosphates into volatile compounds whose formation requires no catalysts other than moisture and mild heat.

I expected the glueyness of the candies to attach a quantity of acid crystals to the teeth. They would then transform the calcium phosphate of the tooth enamel into oxyluric acid, a violently corrosive substance.

Four days after delivering my present, Yana told me that her friend would report for treatment. I mounted a sleepless watch at the clinic entrance. Early next morning the patient was brought in on a stretcher and taken, as I had ordered, to my office. But Dr. Zarater had observed the arrival. It was she who conducted the examination and she decided to handle the case herself.

"Those cavities (she declared) are *monstrous* and *unnatural*!"

Yana's admirer had been unexpectedly generous. During the following week eight other Fideists called at the clinic with stricken mouths. Even Yana, unwarned, lost a molar.

THE INFECTION

Dr. Zarater had good reason to keep me from "my" patient.

My severed fingers had healed with difficulty—even healed, they remained abnormally sensitive. Recently a few pimples had appeared on the stumps, adding to the soreness a tormenting itch.

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The pimples were small, lying nearly flush with the skin, with minute white spots at the center. They looked trivial; I managed not to scratch them in the hope that they would soon vanish if left intact. They would have gone untreated if Dr. Zarater had not noticed them (unluckily for my plan, on the very eve of its fruition). She limited my contact with her patients and told me to consult the camp doctor. I put off doing so; the directress became increasingly urgent; finally, when she showed signs of anger, I agreed to visit the infirmary.

The camp doctor was Dr. Amset, a popular figure in Jacksongrad, celebrated for his addiction to whisky, monologue and fresh air. On fair days he received his patients in the garden behind his clinic, and it was there that I found him on the morning of my visit. Dr. Amset had just dismissed a patient when I arrived; he began speaking to me as though we were resuming an interrupted conversation.

"Yes, there's little doubt but what it's cystic fibrosis! It's a strange disease! Or if you prefer, 'familial steatorrhea'. It's best to give at least two names to things, above all to diseases and plants, which I have a grim time grasping, memorywise I mean. It helps to know that neurasthenia is the English malady, St. John's wort is klamath weed, old man's beard... Hm—your hand! That's funny—did you—let's see, you're a dental assistant. Wait a minute. (He sharply pinched one of the more swollen pimples; yellow matter issued.) Now did you happen to treat a young boy called...called...a Resurrectionist I think; Moe Kusa, that's the name! You did? Oh oh. My dear, you can call it lues if you want, but in four other letters it's syph. It has to be. You see I remember Moe's mother—his older brother was congenitally syphilitic, and so Moe...as you say, the sores on his mouth. Well, I'll give you three zillion units today and gone tomorrow."

Two crows that had been circling above us settled in an alder at the far end of the garden. The doctor's cure was useless. The gamut of antibiotics, tried during the long complications that followed my operation, had nearly killed me. Dr. Amset agreed that there was no chance of their helping now.

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Having poured each of us a generous glass of whisky, he prepared me some mercurous acetate for local application, and wished me luck.

Leaving, I thought of little Moe Kusa. He was a charming boy who suffered his disagreeable affliction without complaint. (The ends of his mouth were ulcerated, so that eating and drinking were painful to him, and his pretty face marred.) He had mentioned suffering from diarrhea, and I had, while unable to treat his principal affliction, effectively soothed the lesser one, with a broth of what the good doctor might have liked to call starwort.

IN THE BARRACKS

Our quarters were cleaned and supervised by an unamiable person known as "The Concierge". Although a prisoner, she was dependent on the camp authorities for her privileged job, and she accordingly acted in their interests rather than ours. Her role was contemptible, but I took a tolerant view of it—she was a minor power and very well informed.

For a long time I could not persuade The Concierge to trust me. My assignment to the clinic seemed of little use, since she had incorruptible teeth and perquisites greater than my own; yet it was through my position that I at last won her over.

The Concierge's joy was her pet, a miniature urubu. She spoiled it elaborately, nursing it through the ordeal of the Jacksongrad winter and providing it in all seasons, to our dismay, with gamy morsels of animal brain and eye. The vulture was as little liked as its mistress, and a resentful prisoner finally kidnaped it one night while The Concierge slept, returning it before dawn with its beak smashed.

Unable to pick or chew, the bird starved. The Concierge was in despair, and herself wasting away, when I intervened. Retrieving two drawn wisdom teeth from the clinic, I fashioned out of them a dentine beak, cut away the ruined bills, and wired the new ones to their roots. After a few days the

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urubu began using the substitute, soon mastered it, and so recovered its glossy health. The Concierge was in my pocket.

As a reward, she promised to tell me immediately, no matter how great the difficulty, any news she might hear concerning the Fideists.

Wandering into the barracks one Sunday morning, I found The Concierge alone, reading a back issue of *The Worm Runners Digest* and listening to the radio. An English-language program was being broadcast—

the people themselves
terrible spider plague?
the webs upon
more like tents than
wind
than German incendiary
a decoration
"food rose plants" from light and air. *citizens*
the autonomous *Joe, the natural*
penis?
the phoenix
sprays *dust*
ravaging

Then in your view, Greg, a huge smokescreen has been spread between the true facts about medicine in America

"Those shmucks have muff it again," The Concierge remarked as the telephone rang. She switched off the radio to answer.

"This is Calvin nine oh nine oh." She listened a moment and hung up. "I think that soon, very soon, I have important news." She smiled horribly, and turned away to begin her weekly cleaning. A duster of which she was very proud (but which she never used, as the asthma faction was apt to remind her) hung from one shoulder. It had been made from the hair of Tula Finklea, a Hollywood actress who, having to shave her head for a prison role, had given away her locks in response to The Concierge's distant appeal. No one knew why she had turned her trophy into a domestic implement.

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TEXTS TRUE AND FALSE

Dr. Zarater reduced my position at the clinic to that of accountant; my baseball stratagem failed; and I despaired of exploiting legitimate opportunities. I felt that I must find a lure attractive enough to justify a secret meeting.

I knew that Yana's friend was something of a dilettante (as children, we had studied music together), with a flair for history. According to Yana, this interest had recently led to a study of the five sects represented in the camp, and particularly of the origins of Darbyism.

This news left me perplexed until I remembered the "Black Pope" enigma.

The early period of Darbyism is plainly told in the documents of the time, all of which are published, and all but one easily accounted for. The exception is as mysterious as the rest are clear. It is a letter of about seven hundred words, unsigned, unaddressed, composed in a garble of tongues; no one has yet explained or identified it. Scholars refer to it as *Pape Niger*, after its opening words.*

It was my guess, which Yana confirmed, that her friend's interest in Darbyism centered on this letter.

Using Yana as intermediary, I therefore let it be known that I too was interested in *Pape Niger*, that I had access to a document in the Defective Baptist archives that had a bearing on the Darbyist letter, and that I had made a copy of it. I even gave Yana a fragment of it to show her friend, for not only had I invented the document's existence but forged a short text adorned with pseudo-scholarly notes.

I enjoy rereading my invention. Its tangential relation to *Pape Niger*, offering little to satisfy but enough to excite an expectant curiosity; the perplexing notes, whose slivers of apt information are sandwiched between thick irrelevancies; the text's termination at a point when it evidently became most interesting; and above all the unspoken but compelling suggestion that *Pape Niger* was addressed to one of the Allants

*See Figure 1 for a photograph of the letter as it appeared in *Notes & Queries*, Vol 2, No, 3.

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PAPE NIGER jets ricovra su podestoir, und stes assedut en les moutoncillos tuskanos dispergent sos magias super i juices d'ogne part, grosse ubre de porco mal. E in tua dolor uoudriestassais tu, mee framano, an unam suam pezonaro noero chuper. Attunzione! Els von te dammamnerum, quel rasse sempere paranda amb faulsschid di destruir. Custodissent Darby, Irving, autorque *Pulsuum Compendii* te a illoris, lles demons: le sun toto porcherie. Nel ano domini nostri 1632 beporcten li Europa, e tost muorons por lor mjerde. "Niente plas coctura di melon, niente plus coloquintida, ningente plu huole de rizino! Fellate solo an bonam viellam chinchonam, la pulvem comitissae," oder plutost pelvem comitissae, com lor? E quando sa lor le caldepisse donato habue, ed un schankro belo suppurantem, fact qualque lor dammé legne? No, mesmo se la de qual juide De Vega (*sic*) por 100 reals per lb. pris avan!

Conprendo tua angunia. Escrivs, "This molar continues to grow both in heighth and breadth, I cannot close my jaw, which is become unhinged, and has given me such fevers that my bed every night is drenched with sweat." Ma ne empla quela scortecha! No ave lors schankrs guarit—y qual a? Mercur purgo la porcherie per lor annoigrato esput. Desempacha to ventre delo excesifo de corrupouriccio que tu en ti oltre los besognes des fams encogt as, und la doulour y fievras s'en despedirano con lu. Lo Pape Niger post no la facre, touddo pourchoriture lu stesmo. Prov nigrum helleboro—qual es, com Sanct Polo dique, "escandal pour les Juides y follocurie per les pagans, ma pouter de Diu por los que aclamati son"—e se lo purgarse demas étrenuif fuss, allievile abhec cet vin: "Five spoonfuls are to be taken every morning and at five p.m. Rx Peonyroot, Elecampane, Masterwort, Angelica, aa ʒ j; Rue-leaves, Sage, Betony, Germander, White Horehound, Tops of lesser centaury, of each a handful; Juniper-berries ʒ vj; Peel of two oranges. Slice, and steep in six pints of cold canary wine. Strain, and lay by for use." Lo pancho va no solament quiete facer, ma tu poras to purificazion maintener, en la corrumpcion copiusament forpissans.

Car sais que l'heor proxima es. Diu va les mortos giustos en parfectes cuorpos ricompor; ma li vifs deuren suos propruos cuerps parfar cor por els van les juzés: per aquest scribe S. Pollo, "Ne scabez-vos que vestro corp lo timplum des Sancti Sprit sai?" Da purgati; und durant tu deglutis, di "Huat hana huat ista pista sista domina damnaustra luxato."

Et se nosaltres dobram nos purifiguer, mi frare, besogne per natturalas mezias ser. Queli sales e solutiones quemics di quale parlas—i son sol magie de strujas vestuta como scientie. Ne suivir Dr. Theophrastus Bombastus Malatastus Heresiastus Catastrastus! Ma sechuramentç'a no perigolo de quel-la. Aquell uomb fo un so patidifus, e suon gran Mysterium es uno vaporetto (ich meine, ein kleiner Mist!). O sents tu com un peddo de insalato staño? Pensi tu che la vecinanze d'un chaldo fuoc te in uno maron malolorodoriferante pozzanguère e una blu flama trasformerà? E fan les estrelles tu chabelli plu prest croiscents, y t'adormen le marees, y te reveigle un terretremblor in Paraguay amb in irisistible pet in Hannover? Quant a "tartar" e "Diathesis exsudativus"—a lui mas un esciancro curat?

O, es tut aus Trotula, aquela affar; lla es mare de tutos nostros mals, y la corrozio que nos spuerc. *Sapiens matrona* davveritude!—piu tost *putens latrina*, y Odoricus ava un odor muy ricco quand su nom ses labres paseron—bocapudre! Ellas son tute poipas de caca, e nos nascions embarbrouillats con esa. La sola *passio* de côte *mulier* fu ses chancres con fards de coubrir, y su nos de braguegar! No es en tele compagnia que nos devenigam limpidos–"car il tiene que aquest corroptible corp la incorruptibilida riveste."

Adeu, mio frallo, soy de buon cor, rencendre tu spe. Tant bien, escris su ta ganasch cis paraules.' " ✝ Rex, ✝ Pax, ✝ Nax in Christo filio," e si secur, subretot pendent el son, d'un conveneboi color d'estre cingt. Mi amor e abec tol en cet exhortation, e ie prec Deu nos de permetre nos vientost de rancontre. Aci il fa bel, et le vin de ceste anee sera bon—si nos beurons le temps ou il vut sara. Ie me subviens tout le temps de cet apareill extravagant avec les ampoules qui ilumine votre lit, cet un obget que l'on parfois à la campagne sortir debrai pour qu'il verd comme une rosse devieng.

Figure 1

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in an attempt to denigrate the Catholic Chavenders, while the Defective Baptists were on the contrary trying to pacify the warring families—these devices seem now no less cunning than they did when I put all my passion into them.

Here is what I wrote:

The history of the Chavenders and the Allants is truly of the heroic nobility: a stock of peculiar strength, whence sprung great trees, and from the trees, great fruit.

Gloomy are these days of drooping gray fears among the golden-haired Chavenders. There is now much stored-up pain among the volatile Allants; and from this place I have heard the heavy din of verbal doughtiness. When Chavenders meet with Allants, there are swelling looks and injurious words, and many times brawls between them, in our day; but in the historicity[1] of the clans is kinship and assurance. Here is the piety of family life, here is the sanctity of family religion where we may not look for other.

Two and a half centuries ago they united in wedlock: Doña Enula de Osorio, (by her sister) a near Chinchon, who married into the Allants by the help of the selfsame Del Vega[2], bore an amiable sturdy daughter, a little broken-headed, her part good partly violent nature had been distempered (as many of their unquiet climbing spirits) in Paracelsus's school of healing; but this was a future virtue.[3] Entering the medical service, she had met and labored with a Chavender youth, in a terrible pestilence, in Genoa, where they were both infected. Afterward, the familial ires spent, they married in England, and settled near London, attaching themselves to the fortunes of Hector Chavender, from whom they obtained a worthy station.

Many are the examples of Chavenders, in subsequent times, attaining by the exertions of their sagacity, the heights of honor: the follicular "patch" that bears their name, Baillie's tribute, and the authoritative collaborations of Rolando, and Kussmaul of "fearful dyspnea" fame—do they[4] not attest it? Other is the Allants' glory: from generation to generation

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they ministered dangerously to the plague-ridden; the first German dispensary for poor children was their merciful act, in Hanover; a practical keenness shewed them[5], that nitrate of silver cleansed the eyes of babes, long ere any might reason it; and one, fated to die cruelly, has had, at last, distinguished letters.[6]

Infinite are the distempers of the human spirit, man is a prodigy of misery, lesser Allants and Chavenders have there been than these, on occasion. One, a century past, butchered his mother; one his wife; another publicly cornholed[7] his little daughter, and was hanged; others have pursued disgrace more meanly. Over such the families have not fought; but then such are not needed to inflame them; for many have been the ills of others, to serve as ills of their own.[8]

Now let them aspire &c.

(The document concludes with a long plea to reunite the two families in the Defective Baptist faith.)

NOTES

1. The writer, who apparently means by this word a consciousness of genealogy, supplies matter for new discord where he hopes to reconcile. The Chavenders have tried always, in accordance with their progressive inclination, to seek their ancestry through a line of medical innovators to an origin in Trotula, of the school of Salerno; while the Hanoverian Allants, Galenists until 1700, and still conservative, trace their succession back to the less notorious Salernitan Alphanus I, doubtless the person who later became Archbishop of Salerno, but not to be confused with another Archbishop of Salerno of the same name. The distinction, insisted on by both families, is petty: for the Allants, in their tradition of close attendance to the patient, follow the Hippocratic instruction as faithfully as the Chavenders, who are so particular to defend its theoretical consequences.

2. The implication here is that Doña Ana de Osorio, the first wife of Count Chinchon, was treated with cinchona by the Count's physician Juan del Vega. Doña Ana died before her husband became Viceroy of Peru, and it was the second countess, Doña Francisca Henriquez de Rivera, whose fever was cured by the controversial bark. This was not known until the twentieth century, after this document was written.

3. Although Catholics, the Chavenders had supported Paracelsus.

4. Hector Chavender (1619–1688) discovered the aggregation of lymph nodules known as "Chavender's patch" (1660). Matthew Baillie attributed to Evelyn Chavender (1730–1782) elements of his descriptions of lesions. Ello Chavender (1775–1851) collaborated in Rolando's investigation of the spinal cord, and Jeremy Chavender (1819–1880) in Kussmaul's research on acetone.

5. The same pragmatic instinct led Walter Allant (1818–1901) to drink a pint of typhus culture in order to demonstrate that typhus had a non-bacterial origin. Koch said that his failure to contract the disease retarded bacteriology by a generation.

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6. The reference is to Hans Bakerloo Allant (1851–1886), whose discovery of the goundou bacteria found its way into print in 1885. The following year, seeking in Mexico the cause of yellow fever, he had the bad luck to isolate the *Leptospira* of Weil's disease from several cases harboring both maladies. He grew a culture of *Leptospirae* and developed a vaccine from it; and having (he thought) vaccinated himself against yellow fever, he proceeded to West Africa, where an epidemic was raging. He succumbed to it immediately.

7. A word of unknown origin, probably from the French *encanailler*. Professor B. M. Jemm's derivation (made in discussing a contemporary instance) from *The Cornhill Magazine* seems no more than wishful thinking.

8. The writer means that the two families feuded over medical issues. For example:

Forceps Royalties. In 1699 Chubb Chavender announced the obstetrical forceps. He did not, however, describe the instrument, which had been used for several generations by his branch of the family, midwives by profession. Attempts by outsiders to learn the secret of the apparatus, whose painsaving renown drew many women under Chavender care, were frequent but unavailing. When at last a group of civic-minded Londoners collected a purse of £500 to be bestowed on Chubb Chavender, he accepted the money, but in return gave up only one blade of the forceps. In 1725 his son, learning of the invention of another forceps in Europe, finally disclosed the entire instrument against a further sum and an exclusive patent.

The Allants asserted that the forceps (together with Enula's daugher) had come into Chavender hands from them, and claimed a share of the money. There was subsequently much bad blood between the two houses on this account.

Purging. Shortly after, the Chavenders attacked the Allants both in public and in private for their views on purging. Accepting G. E. Stahl's theories, the Allants not only purged universally but never checked the "hemorrhoidal flux", which they thought was a healthy process. Evelyn Chavender's father wrote his cousin Wilhelm Allant that "without doubt he would presently claim the title once held by the Chief Physician of the ancient Egyptians, viz. 'Shepherd of the Rectum', except that 'butcher' might fit the truth nicer."

Bleeding. In 1810 the two families corresponded long and abusively over the daily quantity of leeches bought by the Allants. The latter declared it never passed two hundred, but the Chavenders counted by thousands. It should be remembered that at least ten Allants were practicing at this time.

THE TELEPHONE

After Yana stopped coming to the clinic for treatment, my meetings with her became difficult and infrequent. We often resorted to letters composed in the code we had invented, and it was in writing that Yana reported the effect of my counterfeit document, only a day after she had transmitted it:

spunow wosoqun noh soom hund dood suooms

I replied

mous ou moys ı owoy snowhuouhs sumo dood dos Sl

Two days later she wrote

uoow hq 6 mou mommod SOS

(SOS, by agreement, stood for urgency of any sort.)

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Before the appointed hour that evening, armed with a hatchet, I went to the clinic storeroom that was still our meeting-place. In a while Yana came, alone. The strands of hair beneath her fur cap were silvered with rime.

Conversing by gesture and code (which we spelled with our forefingers in each other's palm, like Chinamen), I learned that a summons from the camp authorities had detained Yana's admirer, who had asked her to arrange another meeting.

Overwhelmed with unreasoning disappointment, I struggled to appear calm. After a long silence, the telephone rang. I lifted the receiver. A veiled voice asked, "Is this Luther one six six oh?"

"No, Melancthon one eight eight six." (It was a Loyola number; these were passwords). The Concierge's natural voice continued,

"The sugars are selling the shop to Moscow. Five of them out tonight: La Rouille, Prizon, Donders, Valsalva, Roak."

Dazed, I told Yana what had happened. She was surprised but happy: she would now be wholly mine.

In the following weeks the guards became laxer in their supervision and we were able to meet more easily. Afterwards I learned that Yana and I had been peculiarly favored. The intelligence service intervened for us at a moment when punishment was imminent, and afterwards requested the camp authorities to tolerate our relationship. The reason was their interest in the code. They had intercepted all our letters but they could not decipher them, although they hoped to do so with more material. Their leniency worked against them: the guards extended it to our rendezvous, our correspondence dwindled, and the code remained unbroken. It would have vexed the local cryptologists had they known there was no true cipher, only simple inversion.

* * *

Three and a half years before in the Breton town of Roscoff, the chef of *La Sole Retrouvée*, distractedly mistaking a bottel

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of maple syrup for Calvados, had used it in his preparation of broiled crawfish. The dish thus invented became popular in Paris during the following winter, and it initiated an enthusiasm for the syrup that in less than a year spread through all of Western Europe.

A report of this reached Jacksongrad through a propaganda broadcast denouncing the new fashion as a sign of western degeneracy. It occurred to an observant inmate of the camp that a nearby maple forest might provide syrup for the new market; and the trees having been tested and shown to yield rich sap, a group of Fideists set up an organization for tapping and refining the virgin store. The camp authorities, eager to find occupations for their wards, approved the initiative and supplied an adequate number of prisoners as labor. They also turned a blind eye on the disposal of the produce, except for a quantity of maple sugar requisitioned for camp use.

Because of the remoteness of Jacksongrad and the criminal status of the entrepreneurs, marketing the Siberian syrup was a formidable task; nevertheless the Fideists, efficient, imaginative and unscrupulous, made their business a profitable one.

Their chief problem was getting the syrup to Europe at a feasible cost. Careful planning with collaborators outside the camp led to the following solution.

Initially, the merchandise moved by rail: south from Jacksongrad on the Orenburg-Tashkent line to its junction, at Ursat'yevskaya, with the Andizhan-Krasnovodsk line, on which it traveled westwards as far as Tedzen. The organization paid the state railroad the preferential rate accorded camp manufactures.

From Tedzen camels carried the syrup to Mashad in Iran, via the valleys of the Hari Rud and Kashef Rud. This route had previously been an empty return for caravans, and the drivers did the work cheaply.

At Mashad, terminus of the railroad to the south, the syrup was loaded into three ancient oil cars leased from the Iranian government. The price was low, and the organization made agreement to a long-term contract contingent on a rebate in

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freight charges. Thus, at minimal cost, the merchandise reached Khorramshahr on the Persian Gulf.

From there to Marseilles, transport was provided by Ulek, Manis & Petis, a Macao firm with an important branch in Hong Kong.

The effectiveness in the treatment of baldness and impotence of the old Chinese "jissom cocktail" called *hui tê* had recently won it a large following in Mediterranean Europe. The governments of several countries had forbidden its entry, because of the demonstrable presence in it of arsenic and glass splinters, but enthusiasts still bought it whenever they could, paying as much as nineteen hundred Swiss francs a kilo.

Ulek, Manis & Petis were the principal dealers in this concoction. They had no problem in obtaining *hui tê* in Hong Kong, where it was brought from the mainland; but they had long been dissatisfied with their outlets in Europe—they had used established smuggling agencies, which are notoriously conservative, and would handle only a trifling part of what the market could bear. Ulek, Manis & Petis had finally decided to distribute their *hui tê* themselves when the Jacksongrad organization approached them, through intermediaries in Peking and Semipalatinsk, with a request to import Siberian syrup.

The Macao firm, recognizing an excellent cover for their *hui tê* trade, agreed to do the job, on very favorable terms. The importers would ship and market the syrup, underwrite all initial costs and provide many secondary services. In return they asked a small commission to be collected as a percentage of eventual sales.

With the consent of the Fideist group, Ulek, Manis & Petis set to work.

First, they contracted in Hong Kong for the manufacture of syrup containers—cylindrical tin cans attractively papered with red, white and blue labels. Some of the cans were specially constructed to hold a secret quantity of *hui tê*. A diaphragm of very soft alloy, parallel to the end of every such can, divided it into two compartments: a large upper one, to be filled

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with syrup blended with a potent *hui tê* solvent; and a small lower one in which solid *hui tê* concentrate was tightly packed. The top of the can, when opened, disclosed what seemed to be ordinary syrup. The bottom, reinforced with a lining of hard metal, required for its perforation a pressure great enough to force the compact *hui tê* against the alloy diaphragm and break it, thus mixing the extract with its solvent and forming instantly a liquid undistinguishable from the syrup by sight or taste.

Outwardly all the cans were alike; those without *hui tê* were made heavier to avoid a discrepancy in weight.

A UMP ship brought the cans to Khorramshahr, where they were filled; and thence to Marseilles. The entire cargo entered France as syrup, Ulek, Manis & Petis paying the duty on it. A transport concern owned by the company then took charge of the shipment. The merchandise was sorted in the privacy of its trucks and barges. The syrup mixed with solvent was thrown away, and the *hui tê* repackaged for delivery to specialized distributors. The pure syrup was entrusted to normal marketing channels.

Success attended the international ruse in all its stages, and the two businesses flourished. The availability of *hui tê* preserved its popularity and won it new adepts; while *Mable's*, thanks to its quality and cheapness, became the household word for syrup from Ulster to Anatolia.

At the end of a year the Jacksongrad group paid its debts to Ulek, Manis & Petis, thereafter investing its profits in that company. After the second year, the prisoners' interests were nationalized. (The government's aim in this was not so much to recuperate private wealth as to control the disruption of American syrup trade.) In exchange for ownership, the prisoners were allowed to continue their work in the business as Soviet officials and were given their freedom.

These Fideist prisoners, the "Sugars", were the five whose release The Concierge announced to me over the telephone,

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DHAVERSAC

If this event scotched my hopes, it only strengthened my will, and I decided that the new circumstances left me no course but escape.

On the long trainride to Jacksongrad I had been befriended by a fellow-Baptist called Robin Marr. I was doubly lucky in this. Knowing Robin, who was a first cousin of Yana's on both sides, and close to her in everything but religion, had made my own interest in her seem natural and acceptable. A greater advantage was that eighteen months after my arrival, Robin had begun to prepare an escape from Jacksongrad. I had then refused to join in the attempt. Now I asked to participate, and Robin, together with two Defective Baptist partners, accepted me.

The partners were Adolphe Hapi and Beverley Zuckerkandl.

An innovator in organ construction, preoccupied before imprisonment with difficulties of pitch-control in a newly designed instrument, Zuckerkandl had while at Jacksongrad experimented with an unusual mineral, a kind of *apatite* named after its discoverer, the geologist Wolff. The mineral had proved capable of solving the problems of tuning, and the organ-builder was impatient to return to Soda Springs and test the discovery.

Hapi, a painter born in France, had a quite different motive for escaping: to eat ice cream in Venice again. Adolphe only once spoke of this passion to me, "The war will blister our skins and corrupt our bones, I shall sit at Florian's still, on bare heels, with a crate for a table, *gianduja* pressed from the brickdust of flattened palaces, sipping canal-water coffee, while the skeletal bands wring their fiddles, gazing on the wingless dusk," and wept.

Robin Marr had planned the escape and was throughout it our unquestioned leader.

At my first conference with these three, I learned that recent information had resolved the issue most keenly debated

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by them: what route the escape should follow.

Two months before, Moscow had ordered a double census to be taken in the more primitive regions of southern Siberia.

Of the two purposes of the census, one was sanitary: recurring and widespread signs of endemic plague demanded a general survey of the rat population. The other was economic: a project was under study to develop the area, among the poorest in the Soviet Union, and the responsible planners were interested in learning what kinds of livestock were best adapted to it. They hoped subsequently to improve the more promising breeds with technical help and public money.

The census-takers, crisscrossing their territory along a northwest-southeast line, were to count sheep, goats and grunting oxen on the outward leg of their journey, rats on their return.

Unfortunately the illiterate and uninformed populations misunderstood the survey. They believed that rather than a measure undertaken for their well-being, it was a prelude to the taxation or confiscation of their herds; and at the approach of the census-takers, they drove their animals into the hills and hid them. It was only when the first count was virtually completed that the true purpose of the census became known. The peasantry, learning of the subsidies awaiting them if the count of their region's livestock was sufficiently high (but whose loss was now a certainty) were preparing to petition for a new census when they heard that the same investigators were doubling back through the country. They did not know that it was for a different reason.

The census-takers, committed as they were to searching out infection, hoped to have the least possible contact with the inhabitants of the places they visited. Instead, the peasants dogged their steps. This might have been only an inconvenience if, first, the natives had not also crowded every available farm animal into their path, and second, if a small fraction of the area's rats had not been carriers of disease. The disease was not plague but the animal cholera known vulgarly as *bat's boils*, fatal to goats and sheep, and highly infectious. It followed the census-takers along their thousand-mile jour-

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ney at an interval of six days, in an epidemic that destroyed over eighteen thousand head of livestock before their work was forcibly stopped: that is, until a committee of angered peasants pursued, ambushed and murdered them.

Only one member of the party survived: the geographer Dhaversac. He fled the assailants on foot for eight days, at last taking refuge in our camp. Assigned to the Defective Baptist mess, he there spoke to several prisoners about his experience.

One of these prisoners was Beverley Zuckerkandl, who related Dhaversac's adventures in detail to my other partners. By carefully studying the geographer's flight they learned that the supervision by army and police of the country surrounding the camp was at best haphazard, and in some places nonexistent. The land immediately north of us lay completely unguarded, possibly because no escape in that direction seemed likely. This had almost cost Dhaversac his life: for us it meant safety, and the path of our escape became plain. Starting north, we would make a long trek southwestwards through a succession of mountain ranges, and finally turn east into a spur of Afghanistan. If Dhaversac's information were true, our route should be free of human obstacles.

During his few days among us, Dhaversac impressed us as an intelligent and humane person. He was despondent but lucid over the fate of his expedition. "We proved again (he said) and how painfully! that a mistake in scientific procedure has inevitable social consequences. A census that alters the size of the population it studies is a deadly absurdity."

"HAPI"

The rare green of a few low, precocious plants signaled the winter's end. We had planned our escape for early spring. The weather would be the mildest of the year, and our sect's fiesta, falling then, would be a fitting occasion for our attempt.

The climax of the annual Defective Baptist fiesta was a "home-made animal" race. It was held, like the other festivi-

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ties, on the sports grounds that lay on the northeast boundary of the camp.

The race was open to the entire sect. To qualify, a contestant had to enter a racing car made according to two rules: only labor and materials available inside the Defective Baptist compound could be used, and the car had to have the form of an animal. The contestant was free to decide what sort of motor-power to install; since burnable fuels were scarce, it was usually human muscle.

Two prizes were given at the end of the race, one for speed, the other for the best design among the cars finishing. As the race was four versts long, winning even the second prize demanded mechanical skill of the contestants. The prizes were generally lavish. Both the year before had included twenty shares of Ulek, Manis & Petis stock.

Robin Marr saw a great opportunity for us in the coming race. We were to head north: not only were the sports grounds on the northern side of the camp, but no barrier separated them from the country beyond, since the grounds were kept clear for use as a landing field.

As competitors, we could have access to the grounds with whatever equipment we needed; and we could openly prepare as an entry a vehicle in which to make our escape. Our greatest problem would be the rule forbidding riders—it meant that three of us must be concealed inside the car during the race. We would have to build a ponderous camouflage of decoration and false machinery to hide both the passengers and the real mechanism of our vehicle.

The advantages plainly outweighed the difficulties. We decided to enter the race, and began constructing a suitable car.

It was designed on an extravagant scale. The visible machinery was also huge—twin pulleys at the front, operated by weighty hand cranks, and attached by a web of broad belts to what was presumably the rear axle. The true, invisible machine was an assemblage of bicycles that Beverley had stolen from the Athletic Department the previous summer. Our original plan was to mount the four of us in tandem, so that the slight wind resistance offered by our single-file would give

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us maximum speed. Events preceding the fiesta by a few weeks changed our ideas about this.

The Defective Baptists, as their name implies, perform baptism as an indirect and partial aspersion of adult members. The sect believes that the permanent condition of man is imperfection. No one requiring baptism deserves it; no one who has been baptized can long keep an advantage of purity, for not even divine grace can restrain mortal corruption. Baptism must therefore be renewed at least once a year: and a baptizee is not automatically entitled to the sacrament—he must earn it. Outside the camp, the sect exacts heroic feats of its members. In 1949 four thousand Baptists gathered at the foot of the Meije, in the French Alps, and were told to scale that forbidding mountain, onto whose peak a helicopter had lowered a teapot of holy water. In Jacksongrad, such grandiose ceremonies are impossible, and the Defective Baptist elders have often to resort to makeshift tests of the members' faith. The camp authorities, well aware of the problem, permit the sect to use the sports grounds so that they may have the greatest room in which to work out a suitable ordeal.

Twenty days before the fiesta my three partners and I, together with the rest of our division (about three thousand prisoners), assembled at the grounds to be baptized.

The Defective Baptist elders—the elders, whose average age was twenty-two, were those who had succeeded in obtaining baptism the previous year—had invented the following ritual.

The baptismal candidates would line up along the sides of the sports grounds, while the seventy-one elders gathered in the center. Each elder would carry in one hand a cup of holy water and with the other lead a leashed black duck. At a predetermined moment the elders would douse the ducks, release them, and drive them towards the baptizees, who must then try to catch or touch the birds before they shook the water from their oily feathers.

The mass baptism took place on a crisp afternoon in mid-March. It testified both to the fervor of our sect and to the

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madness that such fervor can breed. The pandemonium of pursuer and pursued was grim enough to hear and see, and those engaged risked tangible injury. To avoid suspicion, Beverley and Robin joined in the scrimmage: they were kicked and mauled.

To the high passion for salvation, moreover, was added a sordid vengefulness; for one of the camp guards, intervening in the rite, suddenly became the object of the crowd's ecstatic hate. Whether from the will-dissolving confusion that the spectacle provoked in him, or from the momentary rousing of an unsuspected instinct, or the resurgence of a repressed one, this guard, finding at his feet one of the sanctified fowl, seized it by the neck with one hand, with the other ripped open his trouserfly, and began (adding his private folly to the hysteria around him) copulating with the glossy bird that now shrieked in a paroxysm of terror and perhaps pain.

It was only a moment before the guard realized what a sacrilege he had committed—already several nearby Baptists, black with outrage, were closing on him. The guard stood near the open side of the sports grounds. A few strides brought him onto the plain beyond, and in a matter of seconds he was running across it towards the mountains, with a speed all the more surprising for the struggling bird still impaled upon his sex. The baptized and unbaptized ran after him. Other guards had to spend several minutes restraining them—by the time they were free to pursue the renegade, he was a fast-diminishing spot in the distance. Two light tanks were then dispatched, but the fugitive had evidently gained the first gorges, about a mile away: when the tanks reached the mountains they turned about at once and gave up the chase. Thereupon our entire sect was returned to its compound. Aside from the apologies of a superior warden, we heard no more of the event.

From the scandal of that afternoon we learned two pertinent facts. The first was that other than army tanks the camp authorities had no motorized means of pursuit. The second was that the tanks could not enter the mountain defiles into which, we hoped, we would soon follow the runaway guard.

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Our plans were changed accordingly. We realized that maneuverability and not speed was what we needed most. If a single person on foot could outrun the tanks (which were not kept in a state of alert), four of us pedaling our machine would elude them easily. If then, reaching the mountains, we could drive our velocipede farther, even a mile or two, we would put a distance between us and our pursuers that should be decisive.

Because its length was too great for turning in the tortuous mountain defiles, the fourfold tandem we had first imagined was unsuited to our needs.

We replaced our design with a new one rapidly conceived and executed by Beverley. To my regret, I can neither explain nor describe that ingenious machine. I was sworn to secrecy at the time, and have yet to be relieved of my oath. Perhaps I may mention one detail which has come to light elsewhere. The "Wolff's apatite" that Beverley had studied turned out to be a "stone" of great elasticity. Thanks to it, the differential and suspension of our car had a suppleness adequate to the rugged terrain through which we were to drive.

While Beverley, aided by Robin, built the mechanism of the car, Adolphe and I worked on the body. Our task was important. Since it had to enclose three riders and the secret vehicle, our "single seater" looked preposterously vast. We announced that we hoped to win, not the race, but the prize for design. It was necessary to justify the claim.

Our contraption was a huge oblong box. Its volume was irreduceable, and any improvement of its contours would have increased its size, so we resorted to pictorial decoration. The hidden machine provided one sculptural touch, and decided what animal should (as the rules demanded) give our entry its shape: near the front of the box, bicycle handlebars protruded. The suggestion of horns was unmistakable, and disguising the handlebars as such, we made our car a bull. I named it *Hapi*, in honor of Adolphe, whose wrinkled, rather monkeylike face beamed for days at the honor.

This decision taken, we decorated the four sides accordingly.

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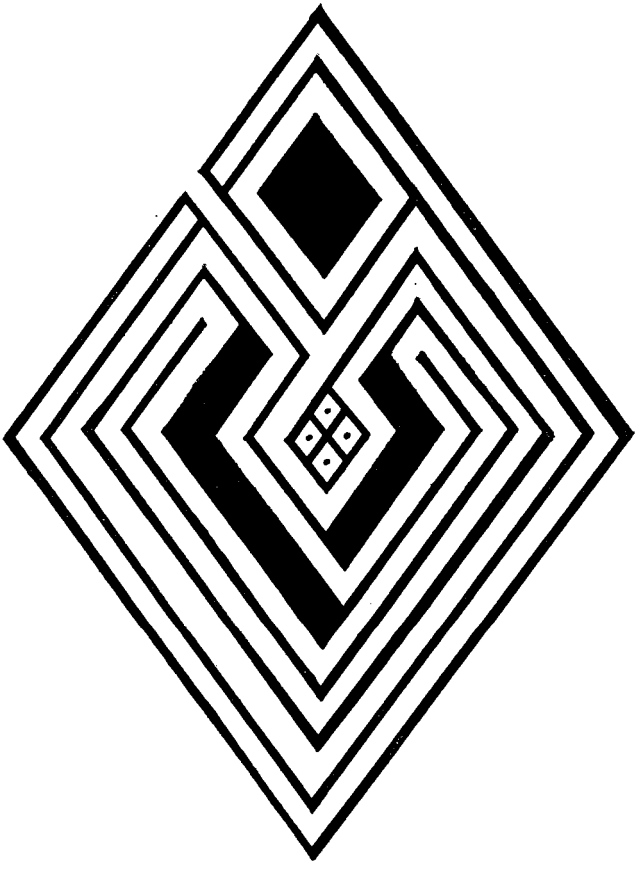

Figure 3

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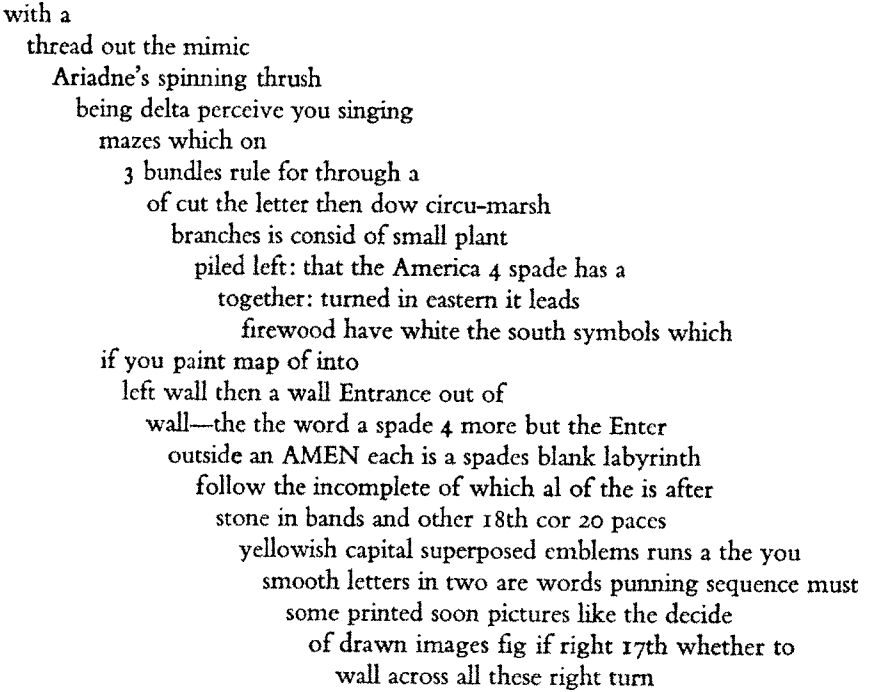
with a
thread out the mimic
Ariadne's spinning thrush
being delta perceive you singing
mazes which on
3 bundles rule for through a
of cut the letter then dow circu-marsh
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piled left: that the America 4 spade has a
together: turned in eastern it leads
firewood have white the south symbols which
if you paint map of into
left wall then a wall Entrance out of
wall—the the word a spade 4 more but the Enter
outside an AMEN each is a spades blank labyrinth
follow the incomplete of which al of the is after
stone in bands and other 18th cor 20 paces
yellowish capital superposed emblems runs a the you
smooth letters in two are words punning sequence must
some printed soon pictures like the decide
of drawn images fig if right 17th whether to
wall across all these right turn

Figure 2

The under on the or

Greek a setting blind bark left
foot army sun a spade wall a tossing if left
twelve before you follow see on stormy each
along a Troy spades at the may blue water section
besieged four 4th at the of wall
rider Troy corner corner larger then a between the
crooked before a than much pugnac first
campers down a patterns then to the painted bust corner
gathered tile floor convex in four one spades liquid of Julius is pierced
in front black army marching singly next black Caesar with
of their on a army some at last the
tents in you walk Greek another drop of the the circular
strict perhaps the then more de-enlarged card windows four alders
meditation perhaps then an symbol two silhouetted
—spades of a spade feet against
yrinth repeated across the
the lab three 3 through sun
outside times which you
spades may regard
landscapes should you
so
4 wish

Note: The editor regrets that Figure 2 has been incorrectly set: The words should be printed in a shape conforming to that of Figure 3.

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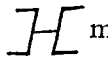
On the front we painted a stylized bull's face in massive stripes of black. Underneath it I wrote:


my name is

And my wife's name is API
We come from ATHOR
And we bring back ELIOPOLIS
EAVEN!

On the right side, we spelled out a textual maze in brilliant and varied colors. (See Figure 2.)

On the back, we drew a black, diamond-shaped figure—the "grid" that superimposed on the verbal maze reveals its solution (Fig. 3).

On the left side, we printed, in yellow and white letters on a black ground, the original tesxt of the maze:

Enter the labyrinth. After twenty steps, you must decide whether to turn left or right. In either case, follow the outside wall—the right wall if you have turned right, the left wall if you have turned left: that is considered the rule for mazes, being Ariadne's thread without the spinning. You walk, in either case, on a black tile floor, down a crooked corridor, along a twelve-foot-high wall of some smooth yellowish stone; but if you have turned left, each section of wall, between the first and fifth corners, is pierced with circular windows two feet across, through which you may regard, should you so wish, four landscapes outside the labyrinth—perhaps, perhaps alders against the sun; campers gathered in front of their tents in strict meditation; three bundles of cut branches piled together; or a thrush singing, although you cannot hear him through the leaded window, on a marsh plant. If you have turned right, as if in compensation various pictures, words and emblems are soon figured on the corners of the blind wall you follow—more precisely, on the section of curving wall that forms the corner's longest side, and one at every corner until the eighteenth. At the fourth corner you may see a bark tossing on stormy blue water; at the next, a pugnacious bust of Julius Caesar; next, the card symbol spade *repeated three*

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imes; then the Greek army marching in convex patterns before Troy besieged; the letter delta; *four spade symbols; a map of the southeastern states of America, in white paint; the word "Amen", incomplete, drawn in capital letters across a setting sun; four more spades; a drop of some black liquid, painted much larger than the spades, but resembling them; and last (but singly, one to a corner) four spades. Under all these images runs a continuous sequence of words printed in two superposed bands of which each is the reversal of the other. The eighteenth corner, like the seventeenth, is blank. The wall into which it leads has a small circular window through which you may perceive a mimic thrush, and similar windows in each of the next three walls reveal views of firewood, campers and four silhouetted alders; while if you have, on entering, turned left, you will have encountered at the second corner after the fourth window (the fifth in all), above a repeated punning sequence, a spade, followed at each successive corner until the twentieth by a spade, another spade, an enlarged drop, four spades, an AMEN, a map, four more spades,* delta, *the Greek army before Troy, three spades, Caesar, and a bark. After this, no matter which turning you took, and it did not matter which one you took, you will have reached the entrance, for the labyrinth leads nowhere but out of itself.*

A LESSENED OBSTACLE

The disgrace of the so-called guards had begun before the baptismal scandal.

The inmates of the Jacksongrad camp had always been well-disciplined (there had been no serious disorders for seventy years, and no escape attempts for twenty), and the guards' duties were easy. Most of the guards were former policemen, firemen, even minor bureaucrats, generally past the retirement age, kept on more out of charity than need. In their free time, many tried to supplement their meager wages doing odd jobs. Their initiative had been officially encouraged after the most enterprising of them organized the corps into a guide service for visitors to the camp.

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Now there were throughout the camp many who disliked the guards. Defective Baptists resented their insistence on supervising private rites; the "Sugars" had to contribute regularly to the guards' pension fund or lose their supply of labor; the Americanists, the most athletic sect, held one or two positions at the guards' disposal on teams traveling to rival camps—otherwise their star performers were summarily confined to quarters. Every sect had its grievances; and when an opportunity to redress them at last presented itself, the five divisions joined forces to exploit it.

The attack was directed against the guards' role as guides, for this was the foundation of their prestige. The service was important in creating a good impression on inspectors and foreigners, and it was thought that the guards were irreplaceable in rendering it.

The intersectarian Electricians Guild volunteered a plan to end this privilege. It was approved by the leaders of each sect and immediately carried out.

On the pretext of repairing the camp power system, which they deliberately damaged, the electricians covertly installed tape recorders at intervals along the itinerary followed by official visitors. Each tape recorder was equipped with a camouflaged outdoor loudspeaker and set to deliver an explanatory text appropriate to its setting. Wires leading to a central monitoring station enabled a single operator to switch each apparatus on and off according to the location of the visitors, who were followed by electric eyes.

About a month before our mass baptism, the chief warden, accompanied by the best of the guard-guides, conducted a personal representative of the Minister of the Interior through the camp. The three men had entered the prisoners' area, and the guide was about to begin his commentary, when a voice from an invisible source pronounced the very words he was to speak. The same phenomenon awaited the touring party wherever they went. The minister's representative was outspokenly impressed; the chief warden was flattered; and the guides were through. Ironically, their own voices had been recorded and used by the machines that replaced them.

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The scandal of the raped duck, following shortly on the annihilation of their one useful function, convinced the camp authorities that the guards had best be gotten rid of. Their number was reduced to a skeleton staff barely able to supervise the prison population, much less control it. The prisoners were left to keep order among themselves, while the army unit stationed in the camp was counted on, as in the last resort it always had been, to deal with major disturbances.

THE FIESTA

The race took place on the afternoon of the first Sunday in spring. All through the previous week, Defective Baptists could be seen gazing attentively southwards, as if watching for a portent. On Friday morning they were given satisfaction. About twenty miles south of the camp a range of hills dented the horizon. It now emitted a heavy puce-colored cloud, which, lying low upon it, slightly blurred its contour.

The change in the appearance of the hills was due neither to geology, weather, nor man, but to a little-known example of self-preservation in the arachnid world.

Wolf-spiders, of a variety that I believe has never been classified, infest the southern hills. They resemble in many ways the *Lycosae opifices* of the steppes, and in the manner of all *Lycosidae* they live in subterranean nests with trapdoor entrances. The winter leaves these nests in a precarious state. Dry frost has turned the earth to caked dust, and until the late spring rains restore its adhesiveness, it gives the spiders scant protection. Moreover the end of winter exposes the spiders to their most dangerous enemy, small choughs that fly north by thousands in their spring migration. The birds prize the Jacksongrad spiders and dig them out of their crumbling lairs with deadly efficiency.

To meet this threat, the spiders have invented a communal defence.

In the last days of winter, the spider population sets itself to spinning thousands upon thousands of little silk bags; they

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look like gaslamp wicks, but are of a tighter mesh. Each bag is packed with bits of friable earth before being sealed.

An open forest of ashtrees covers the spiders' domain. The earth-filled bags are carried by the insects into these trees and hung along their branches, until the bottom of every branch more than five yards from the ground is thick with them—"the image," Robin told me, "of a marshmallow bonanza."

The choughs fly north on the first south wind of spring. At its rising the wind blows high, leaving an uneasy stillness at ground-level that persists for a day or two. It is during this time that the choughs appear. When the high wind starts, the spiders, who have lined the branches of the ashtrees in close ranks, cut the strands that fasten the laden bags. The bags fall to the ground and disintegrate in puffs of dust. Within minutes innumerable tiny explosions collect into a vast earth-colored cloud. The spiders return to their nests, now hidden from even the choughs' keen sight. The screen of dust usually lasts until the birds have passed on.

Each year the Defective Baptists in our camp waited anxiously for the spiders' cloud; for the south wind which it heralded was considered propitious for their rites, and one ceremony materially depended on it.

On Friday afternoon centuries of choughs chattered over our camp, while on the ground the air remained still. Saturday we felt a few first gusts of warmth. By Sunday the south wind blew through Jacksongrad unabated.

The morning of the holiday was spent by the sect in private prayer and thanksgiving. Towards noon, in the company of the other race contestants, we pushed our car to the sports grounds.

After a light meal (the heavy eating was reserved for supper), the Defective Baptists walked in a loose body through the camp, showered in every compound with jeers and brickbats. At the sports grounds they deployed carefully for the ritual concert that would open the afternoon's festivities.

Of all the traditions of the Jacksongrad Baptists, this concert was the most esteemed and the most painstakingly kept up.

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It had been begun more than a century before at the original location of the camp. Since then, each year had added to its grandeur, its importance and its fame. Baptist communities the world over, encouraged by returning prisoners, tried to emulate it, but never with much success, for the elaborate performances of the camp could not be reduplicated. The annual event in the end remained a local glory.

Six generations of prisoners had inherited, enriched and bequeathed the instruments on which the concert was performed: they now numbered a thousand and ninety-eight. Their variety was extraordinary, but more remarkable was their common characteristic—they were all made from the human body. A single fact demonstrates the enthusiasm of our sect for the concert: the only parts of a Defective Baptist that were ever buried were the musculature and a few soft organs. The rest were used to build new instruments or repair old ones, a custom that partially explains why the Darbyists and Resurrectionists so despised us.

The instruments had other unusual qualities. They produced only single notes. To be played, they were introduced into a strong current of air, which of itself excited their strings or air-columns—hence the concern of the Baptists with the south wind: without it, the concert could not take place. Individual musicians made isolated notes; only an exact communal discipline combined them into music. This pleased our ethical wardens.

At the time of the first concert, a learned prisoner had tuned the original instruments in the Aeolian mode, and the key was piously observed.

The wind that afternoon blew with comforting force. Since the music to be performed was antiphonal, the Baptists were ranged in equal sections, one on either side of the concert area. The sections were equipped with identical groups of instruments. Roughly half of these were "strings" and the rest pipes. The former resembled monochordal lyres of many sizes (some of the smaller ones had several strings of identical length). Their frames were made of flat or thin bones—shoulder blades, hipbones, sacra, single or joined—between whose

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extremities a strand of nerve, skin, gut or wound hair was stretched. The pipes were hollowed round bones of every size, from pierced teeth to femurs sawn and mounted in sixteen-foot columns. The largest instruments of each type needed squads of prisoners to handle them.

A smaller body of instruments was percussive. It included armbones against which the wind blew light phalanges (stuffed so that they would not themselves resound); tarsal rattles; bladders inflated and hardened, in which one or more teeth had been confined, whose clattering produced sounds of definite pitch when the wind swung the sacs; and skulls, with wings of skin on metacarpal frames to catch the wind, containing dried-out eyes, similarly swung.

Smallest of all was the group of sympathetic instruments, intermittently used for brilliance and volume: skulls and dried bags of membrane, from which nearby music could elicit a faint hum or whine, as well as chord-producing assemblages—the only exceptions to the monotonic rule—of mixed bones and fibers, both natural (a child's ribcage) and artificial ("Salome").

When the performers had aligned their instruments in two symmetrical formations face to face, those of us exempted from the concert—elders and race contestants—gathered in the open space between them into a large loose square. The center of the square was a knoll about three feet high, made for the occasion out of damp clay piled up in messy fashion. An old prisoner, who had performed the office for twenty-seven years, mounted this uneasy podium to conduct the concert, at once raising a hand (in which a short charred object served as baton) to demand the attention of the multitudes on either side. They fell silent, and for a while we heard only the steady sighing of the wind. Then, at the fall of their leader's hand, the bank of musicians that faced the spring sun sounded the opening A-minor chord of Racquet's *Pia Mater*.

I shall not forget that music. Anxiety for what the afternoon would bring may have magnified my feelings, but there was a beauty in the spectacle beyond its effect on me. With a deliberateness imposed by physical circumstance,

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grave phrases of lapidary simplicity were exchanged by the twin assemblies. Where on one side a choir of white flutes were thrust up into eerie shrillness, on the other, stretched ranks of glistening multicolored tissue and hair answered with a melancholy twang. I have heard no organ, orchestra, or electronic device, nor any aboriginal combination of gourd and drum, that produced so rich and unfamiliar a sound; and the timbre of the instruments, and the massive mechanical gestures with which they were played, were peculiarly fitting to the music, whose measured diatonic chords and tune were unadorned to the point of bareness, but filled with the first compelling fervor of Huguenot piety.

As I listened and watched, inexplicable grief overwhelmed me. In sudden terror I apprehended my separation from those around me, and from the abandoned hopes of my childhood —I had perhaps revered them too much, and now they disgusted me. To steady myself, I squeezed the silver medal I always carried in my right pocket, so worn from touching that the inscription *Violon*, 1^er^ *Prix* was illegible; nevertheless I wept. One of my neighbors, also weeping, then caught me by the arm and exclaimed with a sob, "It is like Beethoven's 'Erotica' symphony!" Only my own tears kept me from dealing violently with the interruption. Afterwards I was thankful that my self-indulgence had been cut short.

The race followed the concert. That morning we had lined up the cars at their starting positions in a corner of the sports grounds, on whose perimeter the course lay. Drivers and their teams now attended to their entries, giving them a last inspection and cleaning. The entire Defective Baptist throng followed us to examine the cars, which numbered forty-four in all. *Hapi* attracted a large group that speculated on our designs and inscriptions, especially the maze.

"I couldn't get to first base."

"*C'est comme quoi—une grille de mots croisés*?"

"For a funfair, it isn't much fun."

While they surrounded us with their welcome cover, Beverley, Adolphe and Robin pretended to tinker with the mechanism of the car. One by one they slid beneath it and

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climbed to their hiding places—narrow platforms fitted with foot braces and grips, on which they would sit until the moment came to cast *Hapi's* shell. I had been picked to drive, because, being the largest, I would have been the hardest to fit inside.

The crowd finally withdrew to the center of the grounds. When onlookers and contestants were all in place, my clear view of the track discovered only two guards.

With a wave of the arm and a cry of "Milton!", the erstwhile concert leader started the race. I could see but not hear the word, which the south wind, rising still, carried downfield.

I lunged against Hapi's two hand-cranks. My hidden companions, whose position allowed each to push against one of the three cumbrous wooden wheels that bore our visible car, helped at the start, then properly reserved their strength.

The race course was a rectangle less than a mile long and about half as wide. Starting north at the southeast corner of the track, contestants had to drive around it once, finishing where they began (a fact alluded to in our maze.) We had only to complete the first leg of the race and, at the first corner, continue straight ahead onto the plain.

Thus I had to propel *Hapi* for sixteen hundred yards. The machine worked with a lumbering inefficiency that might have left us conspicuously far behind the other entries, had not the greatest drawback of the car, its bulk, turned to our advantage: it offered so broad a surface to the following wind that our speed was doubled, and we were able to keep up with a few of our less agile competitors.

This led to a stroke of luck that may have been decisive. After seven long minutes had me winded and aching, we reached the northeast corner. At the turn I had drawn even with another entry, which was now trying to get ahead on my left: *Ergo*, a diminutive but majestically antlered stag. *Ergo* was the only vehicle in the race with an internal combustion engine. As fuel it burned the rubbish used to light the heaters in the guards' once-numerous sentry boxes—half-consumed bits of oil-soaked rag, hoarded during two win-

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ters. It had so far performed erratically in the race, with bursts of speed declining into spells of noisy immobility. Now, trying to pass us, it disappeared in the whish of an almost silent explosion that filled the air for yards around with a cloud of greasy blacklets.

The cloud not only engulfed our car, momentarily hiding its movements: it gave us a perfect excuse for mistaking our direction. Cranking with new vigor, I directed *Hapi* towards the open plain. As soon as I reached clear air, I looked back. *Ergo* was a dim and awkward heap in the middle of the track. One of the guards was running towards it from the right, gesticulating. I saw to my surprise that (evidently in fear of another explosion) he was waving us and two other contestants onto the plain.

The moment had come when we were to bring our velocipede into use. I shouted down to my partners not to destroy *Hapi* yet, but rather help me increase its speed:

"They're still in the dark!"

We struggled on for at least a minute more, gaining a hundred precious yards, for all our clumsiness.

Then, leaping from my seat, I struck four rapid blows on *Hapi's* right flank. At the signal, my companions pulled the wooden bolts that held the frame together, and we quickly disengaged the compact machine within. In less than half a minute we were on our saddles pedaling hard (I, because of my exertions, somewhat inadequately). The mountains rose before us in a splendor of afternoon sun, matching the hope we saw in them.

I looked back several times. Another minute passed, and we were halfway to safety, before the first tank set out in pursuit. Behind us the dusty ground swarmed with white snakes that our passage had startled from their holes. The tanks did not fire, and we reached the mountains eight hundred yards ahead of them.

We entered a narrow gorge and followed it at top speed for about half a mile. Adolphe then collapsed with abdominal cramp. We stopped to rest; in a few minutes Adolphe's pain was over. Resuming our advance at a more moderate rate,

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which the twisting ascent of the path further slowed, we covered another eleven miles in the next hour, at which point our vehicle finally succumbed to the terrain, breaking an axle. We unloaded our packs and set off on foot. There was no need to hide the wreck of our machine. The sheer-sided gorge would leave our pursuers in no doubt about our direction.

Soon afterwards the full moon appeared to the north, in the strip of sky above us. Daylight was waning, and the moon shone overhead with deepening golden warmth until a turning in the gorge hid it from us. I remember nothing of the landscape except the alternating earth and rock under my feet as the path steepened.

For three hours we hiked with only momentary rests. Although tired, we took turns in the lead and kept a steady pace. Just at sunset, we reached the top of a cliff that overlooked the Jacksongrad plain. A minute column of soldiers could be seen marching towards the mountains—our last glimpse of Russian authority.

Around eight-thirty we stopped on a small plateau below a pass to eat and rest. The moon, now fiercely bright in the dark sky, cast a stern gray glow on the fields around us. We considered sleeping there, but Robin's uneasiness moved us on.

Crossing the pass, we descended a high canyon. At ten o'clock, staggering and numbed, we stopped in a grove of silver firs. The air was bearably cold but for some time I shivered with exhaustion and relief. We drank at a nearby spring, set out our bedding on the soft ground, and were soon asleep.

As I lay wrapped in the folds of my blanket, I saw the moon return among the crags to the west, and heard Beverley salute it drowsily: "Sister, good night!"

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A Cat in the Metro

Peter Ellis

Listen friend, let me tell you bout the metro. Tha's the subway in Paris, aw ratheh the *meat* packin business. See, they pack you in that train like a suitcase, you know, at rush hour—everybody *rushin*, nobody movin and stuff. And you is *stuffed*, baby. People so bunched they got to hold their breaff, you know, to get a little more room, to breave, ma'. Yeah, you got to hold your breaff to *breave*. You oughta dig all them people, ma', so shiney with their *whiteness*, which is next to Godliness, you know. See, *here*, they let you *mingle* wiff white cats. But in America, land that ah love, you see, they got warshin machine laws, ma'. You dig, never mix light wiff dark colors, might run into each other. Yeah, might *mix*.

Now all those people was payin to get *squashed*; baby, they was *fightin* faw the privilege. But once they's *in*side, and them doors *close*, pal, them cats are underprivileged, for air and do. They's underfoot, you dig. You can *for*get about it, ma', you *trapped*.

Well, ah buy my ticket like a stone fool—an ah buy second class. See, in the U.S., ma', if you's colored you don't hafta pay to go second class, you understand. Then ahm waitin in line to get my ticket *punched*; lateh on, it ain't yaw ticket that gets punched. But they start you out simple, so you get the *feel*, they let you *slide*. So dig, ahm waitin in this line what ain't zactly straight, dis line was *drunk*, whoo*ee*. It went round the corner, here an there, in an out, up an down, all Over the jalm, boy. Look like it had too much French wine, you know. "Waa-n rouge" is what they call it over there. Them grapes ain't good *faw* you, ma', but they good *to* you.

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You know, the French ack like they ain't got no coins, dress like a Care package. That's right. The troof is they *fam*ous for makin bread; they call it "pain". Boy, ah can stand that kind of pain all day, mmh.

Don't get me *wrong* aw nuffin, see, ah ain't tryin to *flout* you wiff my *societyness* like some a them Paris cats—think they bad aw somethin; you know, tossin their *re*fineries all oveh the place, like everythin *blasé* an shit, ma', tryin to be like some phony white cat, tryin to be grey. It's funny, baby, some color cats think the gotta ack white to be *well bred*, an some white cats gotta ack colored to be *hip*. Ah like to nut up when ah dig one of these down home boys playin he the *duke* of *earl*, aw when one of them corneh boys, like myself, tryin to be an aristo*cat* aw some jive. That tickle me, ma', it break me in splinters.

So hold it, ah *fin*ally get on the platform an here come brother train down the mothehf' track. You can *feel* the tension, you know, all this pressure cookin. And then *dag*, ma'. The train doors open, and shut my mouff if everybody don't start *stamp*edin on me. Cats think feet are faw walkin on, mine ain't. Ah told this punk, "You betteh lightin up on my kicks faw ah knock you to the sky." But he din understand *english*, you know. Ah'll tell you, ma', ah don't know why ah ever *studied* Engliss. It don't do you no good *no*where, ah mean you can't get a gig scrubbin English. Can you? Well some studs are tryin to *gorilla* their way out the train, ma', otheh cats are tryin to *tarzan* there way in. Ahm about to take out my three inches of steel and *cut* me some space. A little *persuasion*, you know; yeah, my knife talk any language.

Ah broke up when ah seen this *old*head of a lady, she prob'ly young when she start out, tryin to *bull*doze her way out them doors. *How*eveh, she step up 'gainst this cat what's got a mind a his *own*. They face to face. He ain't bout to step side faw *no* woman. My man was a straight stonehead, he was wrong to his heart. Mmmh, an that lady was *old*, baby, she ain't no senior citizen, boy, she graduated, man. She look so *feeble*, a blind cat have to help her cross the street. And she was *ugly*,

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ma', had hair down to her waist, you know, hair on her arms, on her shoulders, on her ches.' Well my man won't let her pass. He figure old ladies suppose to be settin down, she ain got no call to be standin *up* and do. Then he commence to pushin on this lady like she was *garbage*, but he gone 'gainst her grain, see, an she say, she say, "*blam*" upside my man's haid. My man, he say, "Cool your pill woman." But he speak in French so maybe the lady don't dig so hot cause then she say, she say, "*crash*" to my man's crown. Then my man, he step side faw her, cause she a lady an all, you understand. *Yeah*, that lady *do not play*, ma', warmin her hands on my man's haid. Cat had arthritis a the face.

Now just about this time ahm gettin inside the train daws, an *whip*—some chump throw the switch an them daws shut like a *blade*, quick, mmh. Ah almost had to kick some ass to get in in time. Them daws shut like a knife, ma', *blam*, like one a them machines they used to kill wrong cats wiff, a Gillette-tine, you know. So dig ahm within now and *it is* tighteh then a *mothehf'*—like one a them box cars used to went to *con*centration camps. Man, the Black Hole a Calcutta got nothin on this, the White Hole a Paris. Ah could not *breave* to save my life, julm, ah was like a fish outa water. Got-damn can a sardines in there; cat could get rich sellin air and do. Boy we was *pressed* faw space.

Well, me an this cat next to me was tight, baby. Chump was *in*side my clothes, ma', had to reach *out*side to get my wallet. Now you know ah don't wanna integrate that bed. Paris cats muss hate the metro, ma'. See, they don't mine integration, you can *mix* and do, all you *please*; they juss ignore you. In the U.S., you's *black*, in Paris, you's *in*visible—you out of sight. But inna metro, they can't help bein botherated by you. Well this cat that messed wiff my wallet, you know, he ack like a *hood*. He look like he'd steal the stink from yaw shit—if you let 'im. He was a lyin *bo*hunky an his breaff smell *funky*. He was one half dirt, one half stink, an the rest funk. But underneaff, ma', ah believe he was white. Cat smell like he made outa underarms and do.

Now in back a me, ah got this faggot, you know, a gay—

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a cat from the other team. Some sawed off Chinese cat, ma', flashin me his tricks, an he in heaven, you know, steady pressin his cakes upside mine, oh my, like we dancin cheek to cheek. I am sorry, ma', ah *cannot* take that stuff from the get-go. They say no one can kiss like a *man*, but tha's all right, ah'll just take their word for it, you know how it is. Partneh, the train would jerk an stop and do, an ah'd lean the wrong way to avoid this cat's cakes, but he stuck me like ah was icing, like a magnet, ma'. He had a six sense, prob'ly spend his life at rush hour, ah mean crush hour. If ah had any strong leff, ah'd tell this butterfly where iss at, tell him ah got six kids aw somethin, but ah cain't talk Chinese too tough in French, you know. But it ain't no big thing. Ma', he betteh keep his hands to his own laundry—ah startin to feel like *close*trophobia, boy, my face was cryin wiff sweat.

Well, now we gettin to the meat a the matteh, gettin down to the *nitty critty*, to the *oaky doaky*. *Yeah*. Like ah say, ah got this cat on my leff tha's so funky, his clothes do his walkin for him, you understand. An ah got this fortune cookie behine me tha's a trick, but now there's a sweet little honey beside me tha's a *chick*. Woof. She as fine as this otheh cat is foul, oh tha's true. An ah'll tell you *why* she a stone fox, ma', she got good teef. You think ahm kiddin you? Yeah, that's right—*good teef*—a girl can fix up her eyes and do but if she ain't got good teef, she ain't go nuffin. See, if a deal got good teef, she prob'ly got a *fine* figure, juss look at them models on t.v.; they got good teef and good figures—it *follows*, you know. Well, this chick also got *femininity*, ma', not like that Chinese cat though. She had *style*, ma', *class*. So me an this molly is makin it; we in position number fifteen—on a subway, you know. We *wrapped*. So here ah am grindin like she the coffee an ahm the machine, an it ain't *too* long befaw ah forget that Chinese cat, an the smelly one too, an they both on me like *fly*paper.

Look pal, get the picture, all this time the train dishevlin the people all oveh the car. Ahm gettin *re*moved to the otheh end, you know, getting ruffled and shuffled, ma'. Oh pardon my *extreme vocubuary*. An while ahm gettin whipped to and

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fro, gettin fro'n all around, me an this chick is like Scotch tape; we as close as the hands at twelve o'clock, but she ain't built like twelve o'clock, mind you, you know, straight up and down. Yeah, we so close we in between, ma'.

Every stop a couple a cats squirt off the train like a watermelon seed, an about ten maw sqyeeze *on*, mmh. It's like *hogs* in there, baby. Once ah get a chance to liff my arm but ah cain't never bring it down. *Damn*, ma', ahm tellin you. Some cat could a *dry* cleaned my pocket an ah couldn't a touched his life,you dig. Well, the smelly cat get off an some *heavy* stud take his place. Boy, he built like he sittin down. This whole business ain't no strain to him in fact, he readin a *newspaper*. Ah tell you that man could whup Sonny Liston. What you say? Can he *box*? Sweets, if you can *hit* like five mules, what the *hell* you hafta know how to box faw? See, ah was afraid to look at this cat, might catch his eye, you know, upset him. No lie. Well, he juss stood there like a *stump*, you know, like a bulldog. Me, ahm all oveh the place; my shoes three feet to the leff of my hip which is somewhere else, you dig. He look like the *befaw* an ah look like the *after*, ma', an the girl, she still in between. People ain't standin, they *leanin*.

Now when my stop come, ah like to *drop*. Firs' off, ah got five feet a flesh between me an the door, plus that stump. But the door don't open at my end. Cats are yellin, "The daw, s'il vous plait. Open the daw, s'il vous plait." If they was drownin, they'd yell, "*help me*, s'il vous plait." Haha, that tore me up. Now ah gotta slip past that thick cat, you know. If he the only stud onna metro, iss even money ah can't make it. So dig what my man do: he say, he say, "*grunt*", and zip—he dislodge some space, like it was steam, you know. You might a thought he throwed up the way them people *parted*. He was Moses holdin back the flood, ma', of funky cats. Well ah still got five feet a people to go, so the stump, he give me a push like ahm on roller skates. He push, ah mean he *shove* me so hard, ah carry bout four cats out the door what ain't obliged to *go*, you dig. But ah *fin*ally *cut* that train loose. Free at last, free at last, as Martin Luthor King said, 'cept he

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think you *free* if you can pay to get *on* the train, ma'. But let me tell you, it's a free for all, that's what it *is*. You kin go in that train an *up*standin citizen, ma', you know, a carbon copy a the community. Be lookin *clean* and do, but when you come out that train, see, you lucky if you still got your own name. Take me, ah just about squeezed out, ma', but my shadow couldn't make it, got caught in them doors. Damn. Now that's what ah call close, you know.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

FICTION

Gisela Elsner *(A Pastoral)* is the author of *The Giant Dwarves*, winner of the 1964 Formentor Prize, from which this excerpt is taken. She has published stories in Germany (where she was born 27 years ago) and Austria, and now lives in London.

Stanley Elkin *(The Guest)* is currently teaching at Smith College, on leave from Washington University in St. Louis. His short stories have been widely published; "The Great Sandusky," in THE PARIS REVIEW #32, was the winner of the 1963 Gertrude Vanderbilt prize for humorous fiction. He is now working on a novel, *A Bad Man*, and a book of his stories, *Criers and Kibitzers, Kibitzers and Criers*, will be published in the Fall.

Harry Mathews *(Jacksongrad)* wrote *The Conversions*, published in THE PARIS REVIEW #27, and later as a book in England, America, Italy, and France. "Jacksongrad" is the opening section of his second novel, *Tlooth*. He is the author of numerous published poems, and was one of the founders of the magazine *Locus Solus*. He has lived abroad since 1952.

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Peter Ellis *(A Cat in the Metro)* is a student at the University of Pennsylvania. This is his first published work.

INTERVIEWS

Madeleine Gobeil *(Interview with Simone de Beauvoir)* is a graduate of McGill University, Montreal. She first met Simone de Beauvoir while a student in Paris in 1958. Currently living in Paris, she is compiling a book of interviews with outstanding French writers; her interview with Nathalie Sarraute will appear in a future number.

Olga Carlisle *(Interview with Yevgeny Yevtushenko)* recently returned from her third visit to Russia since 1960. She is the author of the famous interview with Boris Pasternak (PARIS REVIEW #26), incorporated in her book, *Voices in the Snow*. She is now working on a book about contemporary Russian poetry, in which this interview will appear.

Laura Mathews *(Interview with Jean Tinguely)* lives in Paris and is currently studying in England. This is her first published work.

POETRY

Etta Blum works as an administrator for the Board of Education in

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Brooklyn. Her *Poems* appeared in 1937; she has since contributed to *Poetry* and *New Letters in America.*

Basil Bunting writes that he was "born in 1900 in Northumberland. After a Quaker upbringing I lived many years in Italy, Spain, Persia, and the United States, without losing my Northumbrian accent and allegiance." His books include *Redimiculum Matellarum*, 1930; *Poems*, 1950.

Paul Carroll was the editor of *Big Table.* This is his third appearance in THE PARIS REVIEW. He is now the editor of *WFMT Perspective.*

Lawrence Lieberman has published poetry **in** THE PARIS REVIEW (23), THE NATION, and POETRY. He now teaches at the College of the Virgin Islands.

Lewis Meyers was born in Washington, D.C. in 1934. His poems have appeared in *Poetry Northwest, Hudson Review*, and *Epos.*

Christopher Middleton teaches at London University. *Torse 3*, a collection of his poems, appeared in 1962 and was followed by an edition and translation of modern German poetry.

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Gary Snyder is the author of "Riprap" (Origin, 1959) and *Myths and Texts* (Totem, 1960). After several years in Japan he has come back to the United States, and now lives in San Francisco where he is completing several books. (About "Hop, Skip, and Jump," Snyder writes: "This is part of an exploration into inner mandala structures: rhymes, games, and childrens' lore." The particular game in question is a variety of "Long Hopscotch.")

Philip Whalen was born in Portland, Oregon, in 1923, and now lives in San Francisco. His two books of poetry, *Like I Say* and *Memoirs of an Interglacial Age*, were both published in 1960.

John Wieners is the author of *The Hotel Wentley Poems* (1958) and *Ace of Pentacles* (1964). He lives in Milton, Massachusetts.

ART

Jean Tinguely was born in Fribourg in 1925, and was brought up in Basel. When he was sixteen he built "mills of musical water" in the forest near his home, and followed this with abstract paintings and constructions. He came to Paris, where he has lived since, in 1952, and developed his theory of "*méta-mécanisme*" which "allows the functional usage of chance." His first major show was at the Galerie Iris Clert in Paris in 1958, "Concert for Seven Paintings." Since then he

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has had major expositions in Dusseldorf, Stockholm, Paris (the last one in January 1965 at the Galerie Iolas, pictured in the portfolio), New York, Berne, Copenhagen, and Los Angeles. In March, 1962, he constructed "The End of the World" in the Nevada desert for an NBC television film. His "Eureka" was one of the highlights of the Exposition Nationale Suisse at Lausanne in 1963–64.

Jim Bishop, the cover artist, has lived abroad since 1957. His most recent show was at the Galerie Lawrence in Paris last November.

Gregory Masurovsky, who illustrated "The Guest" and the contents page, is an American draughtsman and painter, generally considered to be the dean (in point of view of residence) of the young American artist colony in Paris. He has had numerous expositions, the most recent in Paris at the Galerie Europe in January.

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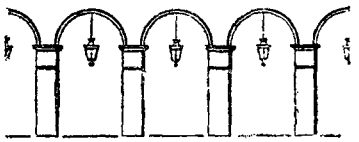

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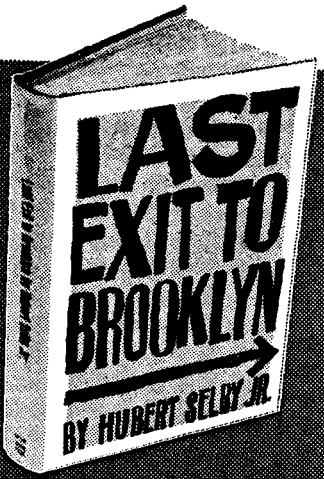

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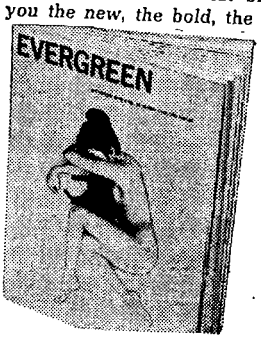

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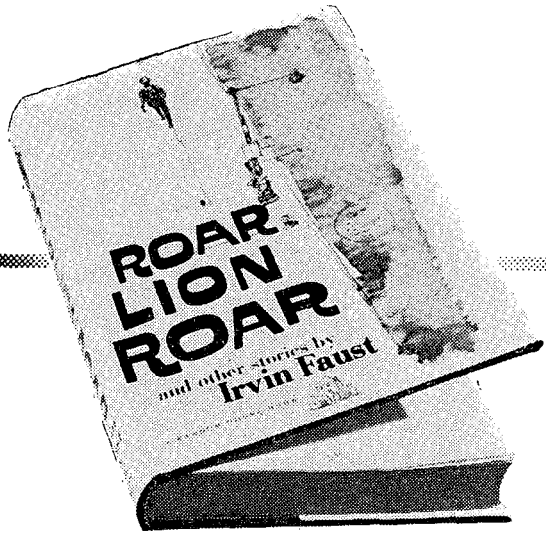

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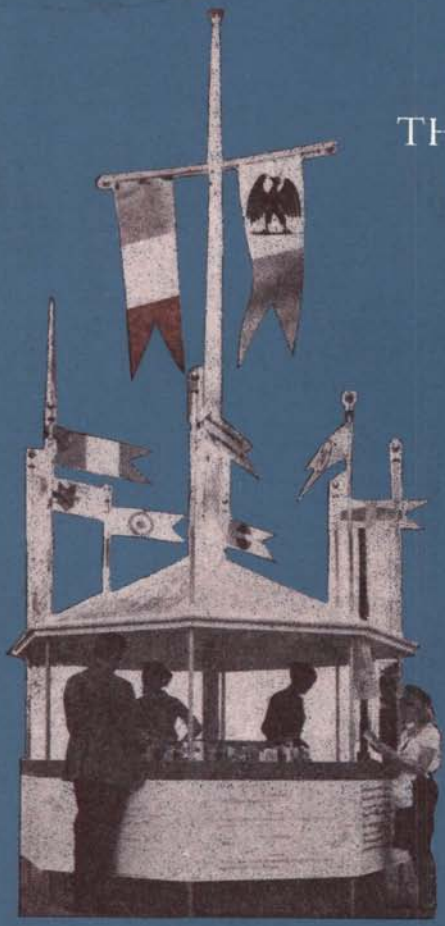

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